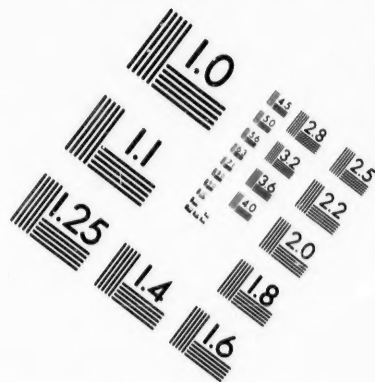
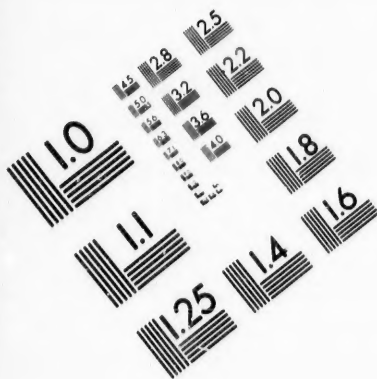
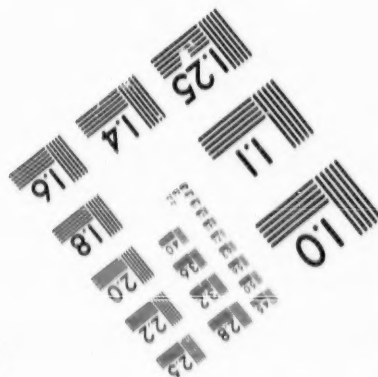
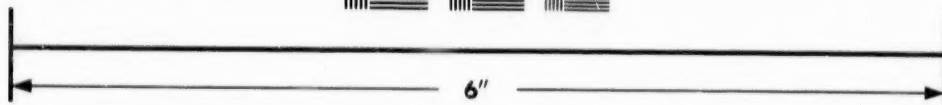
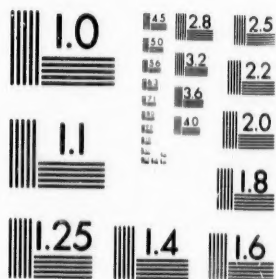




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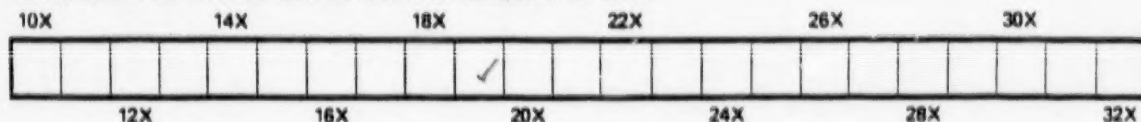
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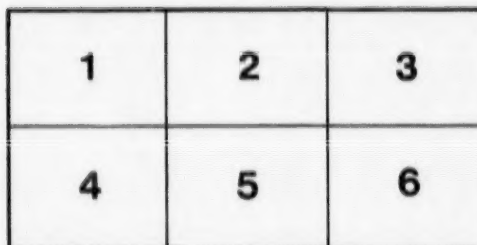
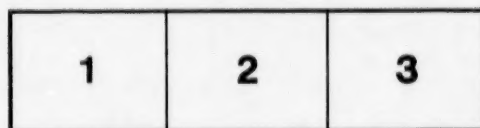
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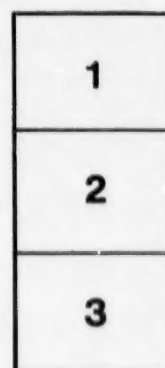
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THE

OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIANS

TO

SEEK THE

SALVATION OF SOULS.



THE  
OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIANS  
TO SEEK THE  
SALVATION OF SOULS;  
Explained and Enforced  
IN A  
SERIES OF DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED IN THE TOWN HALL, LONDON, C.W.

BY HENRY ONLY CROFTS,

Methodist New Connexion Minister.

—  
"He that winneth souls is wise."—Solomon.  
—

Toronto:

BREWER, McPHAIL, & CO.

MAY BE HAD OF ALL THE MINISTERS IN THE CANADIAN WESLEYAN  
METHODIST NEW CONNEXION CHURCH.

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THE OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

SALVATION OF SOULS

Explained and Proved

SERIES OF DISCOURSES

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JOHN C. CALDWELL

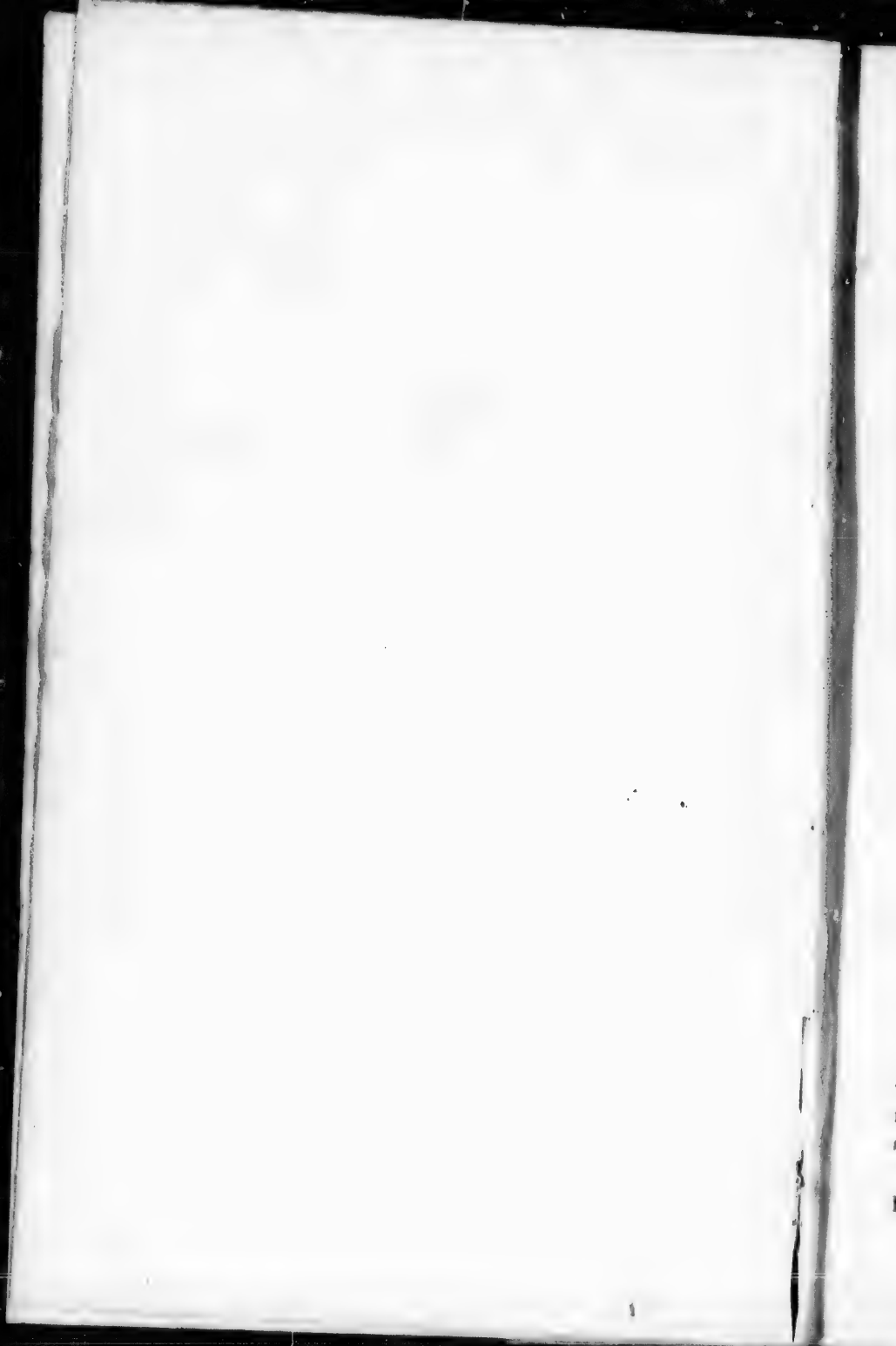
Author of "The Christian's Duty to the World"

NEW YORK

18

THIS VOLUME  
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED  
TO THE  
MINISTERS AND MEMBERS  
OF THE CANADIAN WESLEYAN  
METHODIST NEW CONNEXION CHURCH,  
BY THE AUTHOR.





## PREFACE.

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These discourses owe their appearance in print to an intense desire on the part of the author to be useful to his fellow-men. He regards the salvation of souls as the great business of all who have obtained redemption through the blood of Christ, as well as of all who are dedicated to the work of the ministry.

In his extensive travels through the Province of Canada, he has often seen cause to lament the indisposition of many who are called Christians, belonging to the different sections of the Church of Christ, to put forth personal effort to save their fellow-men from eternal death ; and, therefore, he has occasionally directed the attention of his hearers to some of the topics discussed in this volume. This matter having occupied the author's attention for the last ten years, and not having met with any work on the subject, save an excellent little tract, of thirty-six pages, by the Rev. John Thornton, of Darlington, England, entitled "Christian Responsibility ; or, The Duty of Individual Effort for the Conversion of Sinners," (which was brought to this country by an immigrant,) it has often been impressed upon his mind that he ought to render some service to the cause of Christ, by preparing such a work for publication. But, though he long since sketched the outline of such a work, he has been prevented, by the nature of the duties of his office, from filling it up, and presenting it to the Church of Christ.

Determined, however, to direct the attention of his own people, in London, to the subject, he resolved, in October last,

to deliver a series of discourses, on "The Obligations of Christians to seek the Salvation of Souls." These discourses God made a blessing to the people of his charge, during their delivery; and he now commits them to the press, in the hope that they will be made a yet more extensive blessing to his own section of the Church, and to the Church of Christ generally, in this land.

The author's multifarious duties, and incessant engagements, which frequently call him from home for weeks together, prevent him from making these discourses more acceptable, in a literary point of view: and had he more time, and the inclination and ability to do so, he is not aware that they would be more useful than in their present garb. He has no desire to sacrifice usefulness at the shrine of embellishment: no wish to take away the edge of the sword of the Spirit, by polishing it too highly; and no ambition to be known either as a florid speaker or as a fine writer. If he can do good, it is all he desires; and if these discourses stir up any of his fellow-Christians to begin to labour, or, if they have begun, to labour more abundantly, for the salvation of souls, the object of his ardent wishes will be attained.

The author regards the Word of God as the only authority upon religious subjects, and therefore he has made a liberal use of its statements in these discourses. He has endeavoured to ground all his arguments upon revealed truth; and to make his hearers feel that the sentiments advanced are in accordance with the oracles of God. Some may possibly object to the numerous citations from Scripture which are found in these discourses; but he cannot, on any account, consent to leave them out. He would as soon think that a lawyer, in one of our courts, did his duty to his client, who, instead of quoting the standard authorities of the law, to support and enforce his reasonings, had recourse to the sun, moon, and stars, for proofs that his statements were in accordance with the laws by which we are governed, as members of the body politic, as he would think a preacher did his duty to

his hearers by delivering orations to them on religious subjects, and drawing his reasonings from any, and every source, save the Bible. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream: and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"—Jeremiah xxiii. 28, 29.

The author regards all preaching as shooting beside the mark that does not come up to the example of Ezra and the priests, in the days of Nehemiah, of whom it is said, "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading:" and that does not ever resemble the apostolic method of preaching, stated by Paul, in these words, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."—1 Cor. ii. 13. How far the author has kept these models in view, he leaves his readers to judge. He may state, however, that he has endeavoured, to the best of his ability, to give the sense of every passage he has taken for a text, and to support his reasonings thereon by direct proofs from the Word of God. He has aimed, in these discourses, to show what God requires his people to be, to enjoy, and to do: and, therefore, he has bestowed more pains than some may imagine needful, in showing what believers must be, and must enjoy, before they can be abundantly useful in the salvation of souls.

As the author's aim is to do good to Christians of all ages and stations, he has introduced many appropriate anecdotes, which he hopes will both illustrate more clearly, and enforce more powerfully the views advocated, than anything he might have advanced.

He now presents this work to the Church of Christ, in the hope that God will make it a blessing to his fellow-Christians, of all denominations, who may peruse it, and that he will own it, to the advancement of His glory—

the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom—and the present and eternal salvation of immortal souls. If these objects are promoted, the author will be satisfied ; and will render, as is justly due, the glory to God alone : " Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

*London, Canada West,*

*18th March, 1850.*

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THE  
OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIANS  
TO  
SEEK THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

—  
DISCOURSE I.

THE SINNER'S DANGER AND THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY.

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—JAMES V. 20.

Every human being needs encouragement to stimulate and sustain him in the performance of duty. The Bible is full of encouragement to those who are resolutely bent on the discharge of their duty to God. The highest inducements are held out to Christians to lead them onward in their attempts to save souls. Daniel, for our encouragement, to seek the salvation of souls, places before us the future glorious reward of those who turn many to righteousness in these words: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." James, in this passage, for the same purpose, reminds us of the incalculable benefits we confer upon the sinner we convert from the error of his ways. We are to know, here, that we "Save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

This passage forms part of an address designed to lead Christians to seek the restoration of their fallen brethren. James says, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." It is the duty of all Christians to seek the restoration of their fallen brethren, in the spirit of meekness, considering themselves lest they also be tempted. The greatest encouragement to do so is given in the text. But while it is the duty of Christians to seek the restoration of their fallen brethren, it is equally their duty to seek the salvation of all other sinners. We shall view the text, therefore, as an encouragement to believers to induce them to seek the salvation of the souls of men, whether they are backsliders or sinners, who, to the present hour, have re-



mained "Without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world."

The passage presents to the mind the following important truths, to which we invite special attention :

- I. The ways of the sinner are erroneous.
- II. The duty of the Christian, as an agent for Christ, to turn the sinner from the error of his ways.
- III. The great encouragement the Christian has, to induce him to labour for the conversion of the sinner from the error of his ways.

- I. The ways of the sinner are erroneous.

*The sinner is any one, and every one that does not love God supremely, and his neighbour as himself.* To sin, is to miss the mark. The mark which God has set up for us to aim at is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." This mark was set up from the beginning of the world ; but all men have missed it widely. "All we like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way." Many think they are not sinners because they are not drunkards, liars, swearers, thieves, covetous, or guilty of some other scandalous and gross crimes ; but we need not be guilty of any abominable crimes to be sinners. The most amiable, most moral, most benevolent on earth, who do not love God with all the heart, are as much sinners as the most repulsive, the most immoral, and the most selfish. Sin consists in forsaking God, "the fountain of living waters, and in hewing us out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Whether, therefore, a man be an infidel, a profligate, a moralist, a formalist, or a backslider, makes no difference to his being a sinner. The man that loves not God supremely, and his neighbour as himself, is a sinner, no matter what particular course of transgression he chooses to follow. "He that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all ;" "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them ;" "The carnal mind is at enmity against God : it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. To be carnally minded is death." Every unconverted human being has a heart at enmity with God, and is alienated from the life of God. The man only deceives himself who says he is not a sinner, if he

has not received the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

*The ways of the sinner are erroneous.* He walks in the ways of his heart, and after the sight of his eyes, instead of regulating his steps by the law of God, which is holy, just, and good. The sinner, by his wickedness, perverts that which is right; for, instead of loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, which is the bounden and imperative duty of every human being, he loves himself supremely. He withholds from God his thoughts, his affections, his homage, and his service; and thus robs God of the glory due unto his excellent name. The sinner "walks according to the course of this world; according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and is by nature a child of wrath." The conduct of sinners is most justly and forcibly described in these words: "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." The ways of the sinner, then, are erroneous; because they are directly opposed to truth, to justice, to purity, and to love; and, by pursuing such a course, sinners rob God of his glory: rob themselves of love, and peace, and joy; and destroy the happiness of their fellow men.

*The ways of the sinner are wilfully erroneous.* "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorn-ers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."—Prov. i. 20—23. But sinners hate instruction, and cast God's words behind them. They love to hear the instruction which causes them to err from the words of knowledge. The Bible may be had by any person who desires it; the gospel is preached faithfully in almost every city, town, village, and settlement in the land; tracts, containing truth in its simplest form, are freely distributed in most places, so that erring sinners do not err because light is not come—because it is not diffused. All sinners in gospel lands may be pointedly addressed in the words of Paul, to the Corinthians: "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some of you have not the knowledge of God.

I speak this to your shame;" or, in his language to the Ephesians, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." No erring sinner in a gospel land is unfortunate; but he is a guilty rebel who wilfully shuts his eyes, that he may not see the light. It is a shame for any man, woman, or child not to know God, when the means for obtaining the knowledge of God are so abundant.

Some wilfully err through covetousness: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."—1 Timothy vi. 9, 10. "An heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Boser, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."—2 Peter ii. 14, 15. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."—Jude 11. More err and get to hell through covetousness than through any other single sin; and therefore it becomes the imperative duty of the ministers and people of God to "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."—1 Timothy vi. 18, 19.

Some wilfully err through indecision of character: "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty."—Hosea x. 6. "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."—2 Tim. iii. 7. "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul, also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they also do the other scriptures, to their own destruction."—1 Peter ii. 14, 15. These characters have some desire to be saved, but want to unite in the same heart the love of God and mammon; they want to reconcile Christ and Belial; and to amalga-

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mate light and darkness. Therefore it is no wonder that they are, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They are fickle and inconstant in their pursuit of truth; and, therefore, when they meet with a difficult passage in the Word of God, instead of patiently investigating it, and waiting for clearer light, they jump to a conclusion, and wrest it to their own destruction. Unless a man decidedly gives up the world, and gives his heart to God, he can never know the truth, and never, therefore, be free: "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii. 14.

Some wilfully err through the pride of intellect: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing, have erred concerning the faith."—1 Tim. vi. 20, 21. "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their words will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hy-menius and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."—2 Tim. ii. 16—19. Such is the pride of intellect in some, that they try, by their feeble powers, to overturn the rock of truth; to destroy the foundation which God has laid for us to place our hopes upon, for salvation and eternal life. They will bring their imperfect knowledge of astronomy, chemistry, geology, and other sciences, to show that the Bible is a fable, and the Christian religion an invention of wily priests, who make it an engine of power over the minds of the weak, and a means of extorting money from the pockets of the wealthy; but, after all their puny efforts, the foundation of God standeth sure. Modern science, which is continually becoming more perfect, is robbing the infidel of his weapons, and showing clearly the harmony which exists between the revealed will of God and the material works of God. Men of the highest attainments, of the most patient research, are now showing that geology (whose discoveries, some pious, but weak-minded Christians have dreaded) confirms the declarations of the Bible, and more abundantly reveals to man the wisdom, power,

and goodness of the great Creator. Pride of intellect offers the highest insult to the God of Heaven; inasmuch as it is constantly questioning the truth, the justice, the holiness, and goodness of God; and, therefore, it has ever been, and ever will be, signally punished, even in this life. Let all those who proudly set their reason above the truth of God carefully study the following striking passage, and take warning before it be too late :—

“For the invisible things of him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,* And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more (or rather) than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”—Rom. i. 20—25.

All the ignorance, superstition, impurity, and cruelty of heathenism originally sprung from the pride of intellect. To all who indulge the pride of intellect the Bible is a riddle, an enigma which they cannot understand: “Because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”—Matth. xiii. 13, 14, 15. Those who will set their reason above the Word of God, and who will cavil at its statements, disbelieve its doctrines, and disobey its requirements, need not wonder if, “For this cause God should send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”—2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

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All sinners err from the truth through unbelief, and the love and practice of sin. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of *them which believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine in unto them."—2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. This passage plainly teaches that Satan himself cannot blind the minds, nor prevent the light of the glorious gospel of Christ from shining into the hearts of any human beings, excepting those *who believe not*. If men will not believe the Word of God, then Satan can blind them to his heart's content, and lead them captive at his will;—"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."—John iii. 19—21. Here we discover that the cause of a man's condemnation is the rejection of the truth, and he rejects the truth because he loves sin in his heart, and practices it in his life. He loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. The sinner, therefore, is in error willingly. He lives in error in defiance of God, and, consequently, is guilty of the grossest injustice and the blackest ingratitude, as well as the most egregious folly.

*The ways of the sinner are fatally erroneous.* "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."—Prov. xvi. 26. "Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known."—Rom. iii. 16, 17. Our blessed Saviour declares that the broad road, in which all sinners are found walking, leadeth to destruction. Solomon declares, that "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."—Prov. iv. 32; the Psalmist declares, that "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup."—Psalm xi. 6; and Jesus declares of all the wicked, "These shall go away into (*κατασιν αιωνιον*) punishment eternal."—Matth. xxv. 46. These are fearful declarations, and prove, beyond all doubt, that the ways of sinners lead to eternal damnation; and that God does justly in cursing the sinner with eternal death for his error, is clearly evident from the following reasons which God assigns for punishing sinners with so great a punishment: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched

out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel; they despised all of my reproof: Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."—Prov. i. 24—31. God would save all sinners; but too many, alas! refuse his salvation, disregard his calls, reject his counsels, despise his reproofs. He bears with them long; but at last he sends fear upon them, as desolation and destruction, like a whirlwind; then they call upon God; then they seek him; but their day of grace is past; and now God as decidedly refuses to listen to their prayers, as they before refused to listen to his calls; he as firmly hides his mercy from them now, as they obstinately refused it when he offered it them before their destruction. Is not this both just and reasonable? With the froward God will show himself froward. The way of the sinner, then, we clearly perceive, is erroneous—willfully erroneous, and will prove eternally ruinous, unless he forsake his wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts, and return unto the Lord; God will then have mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon him.

II. The duty of the Christian, as an agent for Christ, to convert the sinner from the error of his ways.

*Επιστρέφω* signifies to turn, turn to, or toward. In the scriptures it signifies to convert, to turn to God and holiness. This is evident from Luke i. 16, 17, where we read, "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn (convert) to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him, in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn (convert) the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Grinfield says, this passage means to turn to the Lord, be converted, and embrace the Christian religion. "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way," evidently means he that turns the sinner from the error of his way, by bringing him to a better state of thinking, feeling, and acting, "saveth a soul from death, and hideth a multitude of sins." The in-



strument in the sinner's conversion is the word of truth. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Psalm xix. The great author, and efficient cause of the conversion of the sinner, is the Holy Spirit. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John iii. 5. "For the law of the *spirit of life* in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—Rom. viii. 2. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done; but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."—Titus iii. 5. The Christian is the agent in the sinner's conversion, when, by his arguments, his entreaties, his prayers, and his pious example, he induces the sinner to turn from his erroneous ways, and to cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.

This is evident from the statements of Solomon, Daniel, and James. Solomon says—"He that winneth souls is wise;" Daniel says—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." James says, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." These citations prove that the Christian is an agent in the conversion of the sinner. An agent is a substitute, a deputy, an intelligent being that can use proper means to gain a desired end. Hence, they that win souls are wise, are to be rewarded in a future state, and are to know in this world that they save souls from death. The Christian is an agent; for he acts for Christ, and, in the stead of Christ, beseeches men to be reconciled to God.

Some deny the agency of Christians in the work of saving souls. They allow that ministers of the gospel are required to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them who are sanctified through faith in Christ Jesus; but they declare that this is not the duty of private Christians. This objection will be fully answered in the discourse on "Sowing the precious seed;" but we would here observe, that the following striking passage, which evidently applies to all the disciples of Christ, completely explodes the objection:

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good



for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matth v. 13, 16.

These words are addressed to all the disciples of Jesus: not merely to the twelve. All acknowledge that the city set on a hill is the whole Church of Christ. The argument that all Christians are not agents for Christ, in the conversion of sinners, goes to prove that all Christians, excepting ministers, have no salt in them, and can never benefit the world;—have no light in them, and therefore can never let it so shine as to profit men and glorify God. Or it, at least, goes to prove that if Christians have the salt of grace, they must never scatter it, if they are not ministers; and, if they are light in the Lord, they must never let their light shine, but always keep it under a bushel. Can any man of sane mind believe that this is what the Saviour meant when he uttered the above-cited words? He cannot: for the thing is preposterous. The days of clerical assumption and intolerance, and of lay ignorance and indifference, are so far passed away, that arguments like these have no weight, either in upholding official pride or sanctioning unofficial indifference. The scriptures are so well understood, that all Christians, whether ministers or private members, know that they must do all they can to convert sinners from the error of their ways, or be punished with the bitter curse of Meroz, because they come not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The reason many deny the agency of the Christian in converting sinners from the error of their way, is to be traced, we fear, to an unwillingness to act as agents in this work, or to a consciousness of neglect in the performance of this duty; but let the reason be what it may, agents we are, and if we do not strive to convert the sinner from the error of his way, better had it been for us had we never been born. Every Christian is as much warranted, and as firmly bound, to act as an agent for Christ in the conversion of sinners, as the government emigrant agent in this province is warranted, and bound by his office, to look after emigrants on their arrival on our shores, and to give them that advice and assistance which their circumstances require. The emigrant agent is employed and paid by the government for the express purpose of looking

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after the welfare of emigrants ; and Christians are continued in the world, after their conversion, and blessed and supported by the grace of God, expressly to benefit sinners ; or, to use the language of Christ, "To be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world." Christ prayed to his Father "not to take his people out of the world, but to keep them from the evil." And why did Christ utter that prayer ? Simply because he had constituted his people his substitutes, his deputies, to preserve the world from complete spiritual corruption, and complete spiritual darkness.

No Christian performs his duty, either to Christ or to sinners, that is not found labouring, according to his ability and opportunities, to convert sinners from the error of their ways. Christ has died for the ungodly ; he desires, above all things, their salvation ; he has provided a rich gospel first for all the perishing children of men ; he has blessed his people with his grace, and with the knowledge of his will ; and has commanded us, his servants, to preach his gospel to every creature : to say to them that are bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready." He requires us all to, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind ;" to, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." And he has told us that he will cast the wicked, slothful, unprofitable servant, that neglects to improve his talents, into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth : so that if we are not doing our duty, in striving to convert sinners, we may indeed say, with the lepers spoken of in 2 Kings vii. 9—"We do not well : this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace : if we tarry to the morning light, some mischief will come upon us : now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household."

If we are not labouring to convert sinners, we are not performing our duty to Christ, who has purchased us by his blood, redeemed us by his spirit, and bestowed upon us his grace, that we might be his peculiar people, zealous of good works. Our duty to Christ is clearly stated in the following expressive passages : "Ye are not your own: For ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord ; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the

Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be both Lord of the dead and the living."—Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9. "For the love of Christ constraineth us : because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."—2 Cor. v. 14, 15. These passages clearly prove that Christ has an exclusive right to our bodies and souls ; that it is our imperative duty to live unto Christ ; and that his love, when fully possessed, will constrain us to labour with all our might to bring to life dead souls, for whom he shed his precious blood. Does that man, then, glorify Christ in his body and spirit ; does he live to Christ alone ; does he live to secure the salvation of souls, for whom Christ died, who uses no efforts to convert sinners from the error of their way, that Christ, in their conversion, may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied ? He certainly does not. He no more performs his duty to Christ than the vilest sinner performs his duty to the Saviour, when he tramples underfoot the Son of God, and counts the blood of the covenant, where-with he might be saved, an unholy thing, and does despite to the spirit of grace. The man who does not labour, according to his ability and opportunities, to convert souls, that Christ may be glorified, views himself as his own, lives for himself, is destitute of the constraining love of Jesus ; and would do well to consider the following solemn declaration : " Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—Matth. vii. 21. Do any ask, what is the will of God ? we answer, to pray and labour for the conversion of all men. " For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour : Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus ; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—1 Tim. ii. 1—6. Solemn as is the thought, startling as is the declaration, truth compels us to state, that those who do not labour heartily for the conversion of sinners cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

If we are not labouring to convert sinners, we are not doing our duty to them. They are perishing for the lack of knowledge. Christ has made us the stewards of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. We have the knowledge of God, which would save them if rightly imparted and rightly re-

ceived ; but we are criminally withholding it. They are famishing for want of the bread of life and the water of life. We have eaten of this bread, we have drank of this water, and we know that there is enough to satisfy the spiritual wants of all mankind ; yet we hold our peace, instead of crying vehemently and constantly, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money : come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."—Isaiah lv. 1, 2. Sinners are afflicted with the loathsome disease of sin, which, if not speedily removed, will end in their eternal death. We have the knowledge of the infallible Physician, and the never failing remedy ; still we do not incessantly cry—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ;" nor point continually to his redeeming blood, and say—"Behold your Cure." Those professing Christians who will not labour to convert sinners from the error of their ways, instead of loving their neighbours as themselves, are misanthropes, and no more deserve the name of Christian than the worshipper of Juggernaut. They may say, with the fratricide Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper ?" and thus think to excuse themselves from labouring for the salvation of souls ; but there is no excuse for them ; and they must be branded with the mark of him "who hated his brother, and slew him." "We do not well, and mischief will come upon us," if we do not labour to convert the sinner from the error of his way.

III. The great encouragement the Christian has to induce him to labour for the conversion of the sinner from the error of his way.

*The good accomplished by turning the sinner from the error of his way, is one great encouragement to labour for his salvation.* "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." To convert a sinner from the error of his way is the most glorious work that can possibly engage the attention, and call forth the energies of man. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to shelter the houseless, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and, in any way, to ameliorate the sorrows of suffering humanity, are glorious works ; and when done from the pure motive of love to God and our neighbour, they will not lose their reward. But by these acts of love we only save men

from temporal destitution, temporal sorrows, temporal death ; but he that converteth a sinner from the error of his way saves an immortal soul from eternal destitution, eternal woe, eternal death. The greatest work, of a purely temporal character, ever performed by a single man, was performed by the great philanthropist Howard, who spent his time, his talents, his property, and who ultimately sacrificed his life, in behalf of those who were shut up in the various prisons of Europe. To ameliorate their condition was the great object of his life ; but the work of Howard, great as it was, is not to be compared with the turning of a sinner from the error of his way : for by converting a sinner, you not only ameliorate his condition, but you break his iron chains, and bring him into the glorious liberty of the children of God : you secure the reversal of the sentence of his condemnation, and save him from those eternal torments to which he was doomed.

No heart can conceive, no tongue can utter, the greatness of that evil—the death of a soul. The Saviour asks, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?” The loss of the soul is a tremendous and an irreparable loss. The gain of the whole world would not compensate a man for its loss ; nor would a thousand worlds like this be considered a sufficient ransom for its deliverance from eternal woe. Could any language more forcibly depict the value of a soul than that used by the Saviour ? Verily not. What is this loss ? What is the death of a soul ? Is it extinction of being ? Is it annihilation ? No. Spirit cannot *thus die*. The sun, the moon, the stars may be totally extinguished ; the elements may be dissolved completely ; the earth, and all the works therein, may be burned up, and no more place be found for them ; for they are all material ; but Spirit can not *thus die*. It is immaterial,—a pure, unmixed, spiritual substance, which has no principle of decay in it, and which neither men nor devils can kill. If the soul is ever annihilated, God must do it ; but God solemnly assures us that it shall live for ever and ever. The wicked soul, according to God’s word, must exist for ever, to endure an eternal punishment ; the righteous soul, to enjoy eternal life. God cannot lie ; therefore the soul must exist for ever. What, then, is the death of the soul ? It consists in eternal banishment from God, the source of happiness, and from Heaven, the seat of bliss ; in suffering the vengeance of unquenchable fire ; in enduring the gnawings of the worm which never dies ; in

everlasting companionship with the devil and his angels ; and with all the fearful and abominable men that ever lived on the earth, and died in their sins ; and, above all, in enduring the eternal curse of God and the everlasting wrath of the Lamb, which is poured out upon the lost, without mixture of mercy, and without hope of escape. Pollock justly describes the death of the soul as—

“ Burning continually, yet unconsumed ;  
For ever wasting, yet enduring still ;  
Dying perpetually, yet never dead.”

Such is the death of the soul. Well might the eloquent Robert Hall exclaim—“ Where shall we find (if it be lawful to indulge the thought) an adequate expression of grief for the loss of a soul ? Where shall we find tears sufficient to be wept on such an occasion ? Would it suffice if the sun were to veil his light and the moon her brightness ; if the heavens were to be hung in mourning, and the ocean covered with sackcloth ; or, if the whole fabric of nature were to become animated and vocal, could she utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe ?”

By converting a sinner from the error of his way you save a soul from this tremendous and eternal punishment, which in the text is called death ; for, in being the agents in his conversion, you bring him back to God, who pardons all his sins, and removes his condemnation ; you bring him to Christ, who, by his precious blood, cleanses him from all his guilty stains ; you bring him to the Holy Spirit, who renews him in the image of God ; secures him liberty of access to the throne of God ; who upholds him in a course of holy obedience, and guides him safely to heaven. Viewing, then, the conversion of a sinner in its proper scriptural light, what employment can be compared with that of turning him from the error of his ways ? Every other dwindles into insignificance. And you must confess, my Christian brethren, that no work is so worthy of the exalted powers of your minds, and the unremitting zeal of your lives, as that of saving a soul from death. I cannot more appropriately close this paragraph than by quoting the words of the learned and pious Dr. Adam Clarke : “ As one immortal soul is of more worth than all the material creation of God, every man who knows the worth of his own should labour for the salvation of others. To be the means of depriving hell of her expectation, and adding even one soul to the church triumphant, is a matter of infinite moment ; and

he who is such an instrument has much reason to thank God that ever he was born. He who lays out his accounts to do good to the souls of men will ever have the blessing of God on his own. Besides, God will not suffer him to labour in vain, or spend his strength for nought. At first he may see little fruit; but the bread cast upon the waters shall be found after many days; and if he should never see it in this life, he may take it for granted that whatsoever he has done for God, in simplicity and godly sincerity, has been less or more effectual."

*The great mischief you prevent by turning a sinner from the error of his way is another encouragement to labour for his conversion.*

You not only save a soul from death by converting a sinner, but you hide a multitude of sins. The word here translated *hide*, the learned and lamented Grinfield informs us, signifies to cover, to hide, to conceal; and is metaphorically used to hide, *i. e.* prevent, or cause not to exist; others view it as signifying to cause to be pardoned. Both these senses are true; for, by turning a sinner from the error of his ways, and inducing him to turn to God with a humble, contrite heart, God hides, or blots out, all the sins which he had committed previous to his conversion, according to that word, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." And not only so, but you prevent the multitude of sins, which the sinner, whom you turn from the error of his way, would have committed in his future life if he had not been converted. That his future sins would have been great, aggravated, numerous, and destructive, you may readily believe, "For evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Sin is a small matter in its commencement; but by indulgence it grows great, and multiplies itself beyond calculation. It is impossible for any finite mind to tell the number of sins the man would have committed, whom you convert from the error of his ways, had he been allowed to go on in his wicked course. Besides, you not only stop the sinner you convert from sinning himself, but you prevent the mischief he would have done to others. "One sinner destroyeth much good." Had he not been converted, he would have prompted and enticed others to sin. If such men as Voltaire, Paine, Byron, and a host like them, had been turned from the error of their ways, and converted to God, they would never have cursed



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the world with their abominable books, which have poisoned the principles, corrupted the morals, and ruined the souls of numbers of our fellow men. And though the sinner you may convert from the error of his way may not possess more than an ordinary intellect, yet he possesses the power to do evil; and if he is not converted, he will, by his principles, his conversation, and his example, injure the souls of others, and do his part towards leading them down to hell. This mischief, too, he may produce among some of those who are far dearer to you than life itself, and for whose salvation you would willingly shed your heart's blood: your relatives, yea, even your own children, may be corrupted and ruined by that sinner of your acquaintance, for whose conversion we urge you to labour. Use every means to convert him from the error of his way; and if you are successful, you will have no cause to dread his principles, his conversation, and his practices; for they will then be as it becometh the gospel, and out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water, which will benefit your family and your kind. On this ground, then, you have great encouragement to labour for the conversion of the sinner from the error of his way.

*The satisfaction and joy which the knowledge of having been successful in converting a sinner will afford to your minds, is another great encouragement to induce you to labour for his salvation.*

You are to know, for your encouragement, that you have saved a soul from death, and hid, or prevented, a multitude of sins. Some professors of religion, who are wise above what is written, would not have a man know, on any account, that he has been successful in converting a sinner from the error of his way, and saved a soul from death, for fear the knowledge of the fact should make him proud; but the Holy Ghost says, "Let him know." To labour in this work without success, or to labour without the knowledge of success, is enough to break a man's heart, and will, in all probability, cause him to become weary in well-doing. Oh! it is cruel to withhold from the man who has laboured, and wept, and prayed for the conversion of the sinner, the knowledge of the fact that his labours have been blessed of God to the salvation of that sinner's soul; to withhold the knowledge of this fact from the pious, zealous Christian, is one of the great devices of satan to hinder the salvation of men; for he is so well acquainted with the constitution of the human mind, that he knows no man will labour incessantly for



the salvation of souls who never sees any fruit of his labours. Labour, my Christian friends, to turn the sinner from the error of his way, and you shall know, for your encouragement, that you have saved a soul from death, and hid a multitude of sins ; for the sinner you have thus benefited, and the blessed God whom you have thus glorified, will let you know the fact, in spite of the devil and all his agents. And the knowledge of this fact, instead of making you proud, will make you humble and grateful, and cause you to give thanks to God, for having used you as an agent in the conversion of the sinner.

*The knowledge of success will afford you the highest satisfaction.* You will have no bitter remorse for having neglected your duty. You will have nothing left to wish for in reference to this event. The sinner is saved, God is glorified, Christ is satisfied, and your souls are at rest. It will be utterly impossible for you to gaze upon the sinner, whom you have converted from the error of his way : to behold the change effected in his heart and in his life : to think of the evils you have averted from, and the blessings you have brought upon, that sinner, without experiencing the highest satisfaction of mind. In this respect you will be made a partaker of the satisfaction of Christ. In the conversion of a sinner Christ sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. The satisfaction of Christ is as great as were the sufferings he endured, in order that the sinner might be saved ; and, in this respect, will greatly exceed yours. But still, whatever may have been the greatness of your efforts, and tears, and prayers, in the conversion of the sinner from error, you will feel more than compensated when you see him "Washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

*The joy that you will experience in the conversion of the sinner from the error of his way will be unspeakable.* It must be greater, we think, than the joy of angels. They rejoice when one sinner repenteth. They rejoice because God is glorified, Christ satisfied, the Spirit honoured, Satan defeated, and an immortal soul saved ; but the Christian rejoices because, through the blessing of God upon his efforts, this unspeakably important event has been accomplished. And as the man who saves another from death must experience greater joy than the mere spectator, who simply rejoices because a good work has been accomplished ; so, we think, the man who converteth the sinner from the error of his way must

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have greater joy than the angels, who have not laboured for his conversion, though they rejoice over his conversion. The joy you felt when you relieved the temporal wants of your fellow men, when the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon you, was great, very great; but the joy you will feel on the conversion of a sinner will be immeasurably greater. The joy felt by the man that saves another from temporal death compensates him more than all the gold and silver in the universe could do; but this pure and elevated joy is greatly exceeded by the joy felt in saving a soul from death and hiding a multitude of sins, inasmuch as the salvation of a man's body from temporal death is as nothing when compared with the salvation of the immortal soul from the blackness, horror, and despair of eternal death. The conversion of a sinner from the error of his way affords the agent in his conversion the purest and highest joy which is ever experienced on earth.

Nor will the satisfaction and joy connected with converting a sinner end with your natural life; but will extend to eternity, and secure for you a brighter crown and a heavier weight of glory in the realms of bliss. For Christ, in heaven and throughout eternity, will render unto every one according to his works. What greater encouragement, then, can you have to labour zealously and constantly for the salvation of souls. You cannot turn sinners from darkness to light, and from satan to God, unless you do labour to accomplish this glorious work; and you cannot have that perfect satisfaction of mind, and pure and elevated joy of heart, unless it be accomplished. Take, then, encouragement from the facts stated in the text, and labour with all your might, and through all your lives, for the conversion of sinners.

Are you, my Christian brethren, labouring for the conversion of souls? You must see that it is your duty, your privilege, your interest, your honour, to be agents in the conversion of sinners. What are you doing in this blessed work? How many souls have you converted from the error of their ways? Do not say that you cannot save souls; for you can, if you have the disposition to save them. Are you making sinners the subject of your earnest, believing, constant prayers? Do you converse with sinners about their souls, and show them that they are undone, and that Christ alone can redeem them from sin, from satan, and from hell? Do you persevere in beseeching them to be reconciled to God? If you are doing all these things, it is certain you will save

some souls from death ; but if you are not attending to these things it is just as certain you will save none.

If you will not labour to save souls from death, the curse of God will descend upon you, and you will never be happy, either in time or in eternity. If you will not strive to convert sinners from the error of their ways, the light, the purity, the peace, the joy, the hope you now possess, God will take from you ; and when you stand before him in judgment, he will call you wicked and slothful servants, and will say to his servants, " Take the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents ; for unto every one that hath (improved) shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not (improved) shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." If you wish to save your own souls from eternal death, you must labour, according to your abilities and opportunities, for the salvation of others.

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## DISCOURSE II.

### CHRISTIANS THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt hath lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."—MATTHEW V. 13.

The purifying and preserving qualities of salt are universally known. Salt was used, under the Old Testament dispensation, in all the sacrifices offered to God, to signify the purity and fidelity which should be extended through every part of divine worship, and through the hearts and lives of God's worshippers. (See Leviticus ii. 13.) In Mark ix. 50, our Saviour compares religion in the heart to salt. In that place he says, "Salt is good. Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." As salt dries up the bad humours which are found in all animal bodies; as it seasons our food, and makes it palatable; and as it preserves fleshy substances from putrefaction: so true religion, in like manner, destroys the bad humours of the soul; renders us acceptable to God; his worship and service acceptable to us; preserves us from the corruption which is in the world through lust, and keeps us blameless to the coming of the day of Christ. In the words now chosen for a text, salt is used to exhibit the value of personal religion to the world at large, and to express what Christ intends his people to do for the ungodly. Christ, addressing all his followers, says, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" but knowing they could only benefit the world while they retained religion, he adds: "but if the salt hath lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men." Christ here plainly teaches,

I. That he designs his people to be of the utmost benefit to the world.

II. That his people may lose their piety, and then they can do no good to mankind.

III. That when Christians have lost their piety, and are of no benefit to men, then they are cast out as worthless refuse.

I. Christ designs his people to be of the utmost benefit to the world.

The people of Christ are those who have been enlightened by the word of Christ, regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, incorporated with the Church of Christ, and whose conversation is as it becometh the gospel of Christ. Christ designs all such to be of the utmost benefit to the world.

*The world is in a perishing condition, and greatly needs the utmost efforts of Christ's people to save it from destruction.* "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." Literally, "lieth in the wicked one"—is embraced in the arms of the devil, where it lies asleep, and carnally secure, deriving its heat and power from its infernal fosterer. What a truly awful state! And do not the actions, tempers, propensities, opinions, and maxims of all worldly men prove and illustrate this? "In this short expression," says Mr. Wesley, "the horrible state of the world is painted in the most lively colours; a comment on which we have in the actions, conversations, contracts, quarrels, and friendships of worldly men." Yes, their ACTIONS are opposed to the law of God; their CONVERSATIONS shallow, sinulous, and false; their CONTRACTS forced, interested, and deceitful; their QUARRELS puerile, ridiculous, and ferocious; and their FRIENDSHIPS hollow, insincere, capricious, and fickle;—all, all the effect of their lying in the arms of the wicked one; for thus they become instinct with his own spirit; and because they are of their father the devil, therefore his lusts they will do." The men of the world are corrupt in head, in heart, in life. Their thoughts, their reasonings, and their desires are only evil continually. Their volitions are corrupt; for they choose evil and refuse good. Their affections are earthly, sensual, devilish; for they love and serve the creature rather than their Creator, who is blessed for evermore; and they live in malice and envy; hateful, and hating one another. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." And what is the result of the Divine inspection? it is: "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."—Psalm xiv. 1, 2, 3. What a dreadful picture does the apostle Paul give of the total and universal corruption of the heathen world in the first and third chapters of his

epistle to the Romans ; a fac simile of which is found in the heathen world at this very day ! Very little better is the state of the nominal Christian world than the state of the heathen world. Nominal Christians "Profess that they know God ; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."—Titus i. 16. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof : from such turn away."—2 Tim. iii. 5.

*The infinitely holy God looks down upon this living mass of corruption with abhorrence.* He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon sin without detestation ; for it is the abominable thing which he hates. This living mass of corruption sends up to heaven the most horrid stench : a stench so odious, that infinite patience could not bear it, if it were not for the sweet incense of Christ's sacrifice. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour."—Ephes. v. 2. The sweet odour of Christ's sacrifice exceeds the bad odour of man's sin, and causes God to bear long with it, and induces him to seek the removal of this corruption without destroying its subjects. Ungodly men, who are the servants of corruption, are exposed to eternal death ; for it is written : "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints ; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient ; but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."—Ephes. v. 3—6. And again, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death."—Rev. xxi. 8. These plain and positive declarations are sufficient to convince any man, whose mind is open to the reception of truth, that the world is in a perishing condition, and needs the utmost efforts of the people of Christ to preserve it from destruction.

*To recover men from the corruption of sin, and from eternal death which is the punishment of sin, Christ has established a Church in the world, and has constituted the members thereof the salt of the earth.* "Ye are the salt of the earth." The

death of Christ is the fountain for sin and uncleanness; the Spirit of Christ is sent to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; the word of truth is given to convert the souls of the unregenerate; the ministry of reconciliation is given, by which God beseeches men to turn from their evil ways, and by which Christ prays the ungodly to be reconciled to God; the Church of Christ is set on the hill, and organized, according to the directions of Christ, for the express purpose of saving this perishing world from corruption and eternal death. What more, then, is needed to convert the world? Nothing but the zealous and persevering efforts of the people of Christ. Christ aims at the salvation of the world through his people. "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples," or Christians, "of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."—Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Here we discover that Christ designs his people to be of the utmost benefit to the world. They are the salt of it; and he requires them to make Christians of all nations. If this great design of Christ is to be fulfilled, then, as the salt of the earth, you

*Must benefit the world by your prayers.* All men must be the subjects of your earnest prayers. You are commanded to make "Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."—1 Tim. ii. 1, 3, 4. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James v. 16. The prayers of the righteous, like salt, have a preserving and purifying influence. "Prayer, ardent, opens heaven." Christians, who are Israelites indeed, are intercessors with God for a lost world. Like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, and Daniel, they plead with God to spare the ungodly, who are daily exposed to the righteous indignation of Jehovah; and, in answer to their prayers, many temporal calamities, many heavy judgments, are turned aside, which would otherwise fall, with crushing force, on the head of the defenceless sinner, or descend, like an avalanche, upon the ungodly nation in which he dwells. By inwrought and fervent prayer, the people of Christ must bring down upon the world, in copious showers, that spiritual influence which will effectually change the hearts and lives of ungodly men.



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The fervent intercessions of righteous men have, before now, caused God to pour out his Spirit, so copiously, that hundreds and thousands have received the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. If the people of God were only resolved to bring down upon the world all that spiritual influence which sincere, united, be'ieving, persevering prayer would cause God to bestow, this corrupt world would soon be purified; and instead of almost universal corruption, the glorious prediction would soon be fulfilled: "For, from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."—Mal. i. 11. As the salt of the earth,

*The world must be benefited by your conversation.* To this end you must obey the apostolic injunctions: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man."—Col. iv. 6. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers."—Ephes. iv. 29. Solomon declares "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life. The tongue of the just is as choice silver. The lips of the righteous feed many."—Prov. x. 11, 20, 21. "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook."—Prov. xviii. 4. The pious conversation of good men is just as beneficial to the world as these passages represent. The instructions, reproofs, exhortations, and expostulations of the righteous have abashed many a sinner who was bent on mischief; caused him to be ashamed of his conduct, to abandon his sinful practices, and seek forgiveness and purity through the atonement of Christ. The words of instruction and encouragement which the righteous have given to those who have felt pious desires, but still who were found halting between two opinions, weak and irresolute, driven by every wind of temptation to the commission of sin, have caused them to decide for God, and to choose religion for their portion. The language of Eliphaz to Job is true of every Christian who enjoys much of the Spirit of God, and who has faithfully discharged his duty: "Behold thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees."—Job



iv. 3, 4. The chaste conversation of Christians, coupled with the fear of sinning, has won many a sinner to Christ, caused him to embrace religion, and to come out boldly and decidedly on the Lord's side. The man who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him carries the salt of grace in his heart wherever he goes, and makes manifest the savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place. He converses, when convenient, on spiritual and heavenly things so judiciously, so affectionately, and so earnestly, that sinners involuntarily are struck with admiration, and feel intensely the need of religion and the desire for piety; and here is often laid the foundation of their conversion. Hence, in the relations of Christian experience, it often is manifest that the conversion of many originated in conversations held with good men. Servants, also, have been known to have imbibed their first religious impressions from conversations of a spiritual nature which were carried on at the tables where they served. Watching for opportunities to do good, pious men and holy women may often, almost imperceptibly, turn the conversation of a company into a religious channel, and thus produce seriousness and thoughtfulness in the hearts of the most frivolous and careless. Those who care nothing about God and Christ, and death and eternity; who would be on their guard against a regular attempt at their conversion, have often impressions produced upon their minds by a casual or incidental religious conversation, which ends in their conversion. And, depend upon it, if all the followers of Christ would humbly, believingly, and resolutely attempt to do good in this way, a change would soon pass over the face of society; and the purifying of the souls of men would commence in such earnest, and extend with such rapidity, that all doubts about Christians being the salt of the earth would speedily vanish. As the salt of the earth,

*The world must be benefited by your example.* The humility, the justice, the purity, the benevolence, the joy, and the zeal, which true Christians ever exhibit in the whole of their conduct, arrest the attention of the ungodly, win their affections, and often stimulate them to seek the saving grace of God, which will enable them to live as Christians live. Example has a powerful effect upon the human mind; therefore, Christ says in the context, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The Christian may say little;

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yet, if he lives as he ought, his unbending integrity, his spot-  
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 his untiring zeal in promoting those objects which  
 glorify God and benefit man, have a thousand voices, which  
 speak in trumpet tones to the hearts of ungodly men, and  
 make them tremble at the thought of their own vileness. The  
 eloquence of a truly pious life falls upon the sinner's heart  
 like dew upon the tender herb, or like showers upon the  
 mown grass, and often produces the most blessed results.  
 The moral beauty of a truly pious life often captivates the  
 most profligate, fills him with disgust at the wicked deformi-  
 ties which blemish his character, and causes him to re-  
 solve, through the grace of God, to lead a new life. Upon  
 the young the benefit of a pious example is incalculable.  
 Their hearts are not yet hardened through the deceitfulness  
 of sin. They are not yet corrupted through the lust of the  
 flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. They  
 are imitative beings; and by placing before them a truly  
 holy life, they may be led to imitate your example; and thus  
 be preserved from the corruption and misery that are in the  
 world, by being led early to Christ, and by being early  
 satisfied with his mercy. As the salt of the earth,

*The world must be benefitted by your direct personal labour s  
 for the conversion of the ungodly.* You may pray for the  
 conversion of the world, your conversation may be accord ing  
 to the gospel, your example may be every thing that can be  
 required; yet, you cannot fully answer the end of Christ i n  
 your calling and election to gospel privileges, unless you pe r-  
 sonally labour to convert sinners from the error of their ways.  
 Christ addresses every one whom he saves in these words :  
 "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the  
 Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."  
 "Son, go work to day in my vineyard." "He that is not with  
 me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth  
 abroad." "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy brother: thou  
 shalt in any wise reprove him." "When thou art converted,  
 strengthen thy brethren." "But to do good and communi-  
 cate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."  
 Personal effort, therefore, is still required with the sinner in  
 addition to your prayers, your conversation, and your exam-  
 ple. Another cannot tell your friends what God has done for  
 you as you can yourselves. You must go yourselves into  
 the vineyard and work: proxy will not do here. You must  
 personally gather with Christ; personally rep rove sinners;

personally labour to strengthen your brethren, and to do good to all men. Many shrink from this personal effort ; but unless it is attended to, the world will never be converted. All Christians must use efforts to convince men of sin, and persuade them to give up sin. We firmly believe that answers to the important queries contained in the lines,

“ Lord over all, if thou hast made,  
Hast ransom'd every soul of man,  
Why is thy grace so long delayed ?  
Why unfulfill'd the saving plan ?  
The bliss for Adam's race design'd,  
When will it reach to all mankind ? ”

may be found in the want of universal personal effort on the part of the people of Christ.

Thus the people of Christ are the salt of the earth ; and when they act in exact accordance with their high designation, they will be of the utmost benefit to the world. I need not now dwell upon the point that he that saves one soul from corruption and death, does more real, permanent good, than he that founds an empire or breaks the chains of a million slaves. Christians, who are faithful to the trust reposed in them, must decrease human misery, and increase human happiness. They must lessen the number of those who are going to hell, and increase the number of those who are going to heaven. No man can tell the good he may do by the conversion of a single soul ; for the soul thus converted will become an agent in the conversion of others, and they will become the agents in the conversion of more ; and thus, from so small a beginning, hundreds and thousands may be brought to Christ and heaven.

If you thus pray, converse, walk, and labour for the benefit of the ungodly, you will please your God ; who has honoured you more, by constituting you the salt of the earth, than if he had made you the proprietors of the earth ; and you will be of more service to the world than if you could remove all the temporal evils under which mankind now groan. Ye are the salt of the earth ; act in such a manner as to be worthy of the glorious appellation by which you are distinguished. Remember, ever remember, that Christ calls you the salt of the earth ; because, he designs you to be the conveyers of the salt of grace to mankind. Act as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, and you will save it from universal corruption, and speedy destruction. Christ teaches :

II. That, when Christians lose their religion, they can do no good to mankind.

"But if the salt have lost his savour." *Salt may lose its savour.* Some have doubted this; but there is indisputable proof, that, under certain circumstances, salt will lose its savour. Mr. Maundrell, describing the valley of salt, says, "On the side toward Gibul there is a small precipice, about two men's length, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt; and in this you may see how the veins of it lie. I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the sun, rain, and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savour: the inner part, which was connected with the rock, retained its savour, as I found by proof." This is a valuable fact; and forcibly illustrates every passage in which the Saviour employs salt to represent grace in the heart, or the benefit which Christians are designed to be to the world; but, especially does it illustrate the possibility of a Christian losing his religion; and that, then, he can be of no saving benefit to mankind.

*As salt may lose its savour, and be of no use in seasoning; so may a Christian lose his piety, and cease to be useful to the souls of his fellow-men.* He may retain the form of godliness; but, if he is separated from the Rock Christ Jesus, he will be destitute of its power, and then can be of no more service to the souls of men, until he is restored to the living rock. Union with Christ is absolutely essential to both piety and usefulness. Christ teaches these truths, in the plainest manner, in the following paragraph: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." —John xv. 1—8. This important paragraph clearly evin-

ces, that union with Christ is the source of both our piety and usefulness; and not only so, but it forcibly points out the fact, that, *if we lose our religion, we shall be separated from Jesus*, and then we can be of no real benefit to mankind. It is union with Christ that gives us power, both with God and man. While united to Christ, there is a holy savour connected with us, which renders us acceptable to God; and our prayers, conversations, examples, and efforts profitable to men; but when we forsake Christ, this savour departs. Dr. Adam Clarke, in his note on our text, after quoting Maundrell's statement, speaks thus, "A preacher, or private Christian, who has lost the life of Christ, and the witness of the Spirit, out of his soul, may be likened to this salt. He may have the *sparks and glittering particles* of true wisdom, but without its unction or comfort. Only that which is *connected with the rock*, the soul that is in union with Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, can preserve its savour, and be instrumental of good to others." Whitby has the following note on this passage: "Salt is given to make things savoury, according to that question of Job's, (vi. 6,) Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? and also to save them from putrefaction; so that the import of this metaphor is this: Ye are appointed, by that pure and holy doctrine, which you are to preach, and by the savour of your good conversation, to purge the world from that corruption in which it lies, and present them as a *sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour, holy and acceptable to God*; but, if you, yourselves, should lose the savour of your good conversation, and become putrified members in my body, you would be wholly useless to these good ends; and, therefore, can expect nothing but to be rejected by me, and cast off, as *unsavoury salt* is cast to the dunghill."

*It is impossible for you, my Christian friends, to save souls from death if you lose your religion.* David knew this; hence, he says, in the fifty-first Psalm, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." The Psalmist evidently felt that it was impossible for him to teach transgressors God's ways, and see sinners converted by his efforts, while he, himself, was in a backsliding state. Should your morality continue, after you have fallen from grace, yet you will have lost the power of godliness; therefore, you will not be able to teach sinners, with a feeling heart, with a loving mind, with a

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zealous spirit, which are all requisite in the conversion of a soul. Besides, should you continue your efforts to save souls, there will be no holy unction in your prayers, no godly savour in your conversations, no constraining force in your example, and no blessing of God upon your efforts. When you have lost your religion, sinners will soon perceive it; and, instead of listening with fear to your prayer, and with interest to your conversation: instead of feeling deeply the power of your example and efforts, they will remain perfectly unconcerned; or, if they have any sense and spirit, they will meet you with the keen and unanswerable rebuff, "Physician heal thyself."

*The conduct of those who have lost their religion, instead of benefitting mankind, is the greatest barrier that lies in the way of purging the world from its corruption.* Peter declares, that backsliders "Are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."—2 Peter ii. 17: read to the end of the chapter. Jude declares, backsliders "Are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."—Jude 12, 13. Language could not more forcibly describe the unprofitableness and destructiveness which characterize the course of backsliders, whether they have been public teachers of Christianity, or public professors of the religion of Jesus. They are as useless to mankind as the empty well, or as the light and transient cloud. They are as unseemly in the Church, as spots are in a white garment. They are as unproductive of good as barren trees, yea, as trees twice dead, and plucked up by the roots. They are as uneasy and restless as the raging sea, which ever casts up mire and dirt. They are as mischievous to mankind as wandering stars, or ignes fatui, wills-o'-the-wisp, which dance before the benighted, lost traveller, and lead him further and further astray from the course he wishes to pursue. They are going headlong to that outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and dragging others down with them to the bottomless pit. By losing the salt of grace, the savour of godliness, you will give the saints cause to mourn; for you will weaken their hands. You will give the enemies



of religion occasion to blaspheme the holy name of God, and the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; for they will declare that religion is a cunningly devised fable. You will embolden sinners in their sins; for they will declare that they are better men than you are. You will discourage the inquirers after salvation, and prevent many of them entering in at the strait gate; for they will both think and say, "It is no use our attempting to become pious, for some of those who have professed religion have fallen, and they are now worse sinners than they were previous to their conversion; if we become pious, we shall, in all probability, fall too, and bring disgrace upon the cause of Christ: we will let religion alone." Thus do backsliders prevent the purification of the world from its corruptions. A lady said to the writer of these pages, a few days ago, when speaking of an unhappy backslider, "That man has done more harm, in this village, in keeping the people from Christ, and in encouraging men to sin, than any other person that I have known since I have been here. His conduct is abominable: his tongue is dreadful!" Behind backsliders and hypocrites sinners ever hide themselves; and it is the most difficult work in the world to bring them from behind these refuges of lies, and induce them to place their guilty souls upon the sure foundation which God has laid in Zion. An insincere profession of religion, and a turning aside from the holy commandment, do more injury to the cause of Christ, more to hinder the conversion of sinners to God, than anything else that we can conceive.

*Salt, when it has lost its savour, never finds it more.* "It is thenceforth good for nothing, and men cast it out." If salt is needed, a fresh supply must be obtained. And so it is in religion. If we lose our piety, we can never be saved through the grace we once had; if we are to be saved, we must come again to the blood of sprinkling; and, by penitence, and faith, and prayer, receive from God a fresh supply of the salt of grace. If we lose our piety, we can never benefit the souls of our fellow-men again, until the joy of God's salvation is restored; and until we make it manifest, by our lives, to the world, that we have sincerely repented of our backslidings and wanderings, and are, in reality, again the children of God. There is gospel truth, which it would be well for us all to ponder, seriously and frequently, as well as poetry, in the lines:

" Ah, Lord ! with trembling I confess,  
A gracious soul may fall from grace :  
The salt may lose its seasoning power,  
And never—never find it more."

And it becomes every Christian to pray earnestly and constantly to God,

" Lest that my fearful case should be,  
Each moment knit my soul to thee ;  
And lead me to the mount above,  
Through the low vale of humble love."

Consider,

III. That, when Christians have lost their piety, and are of no benefit to the world, they are cast out as worthless refuse.

"It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden underfoot of men." Dr. T. M. Harris, in his *Natural History of the Bible*, says, "This is spoken of the mineral salt, as mentioned by Maundrell, a great deal of which was made use of in offerings at the temple ; such of it as had become insipid, was thrown out, to repair the roads, and prevent slipping in wet weather. The existence of such a salt, and its application to such a use, Schoetgenius has largely proved in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, Vol. 1. p. 18. The salt *unfit for the land* (Luke xvi. 34), Le Clerc conjectures to be that made of wood-ashes, which loses its savour, and becomes no longer serviceable." page 331. Dr. Adam Clarke's note is as follows : "[To be trodden underfoot.] There was a species of salt in Judea, which was generated at the lake Asphaltites, and hence called *bituminous salt* : easily rendered vapid, and of no other use but to be spread in a part of the temple, to prevent slipping in wet weather. This is probably what our Lord alluded to in this place." Ye, Christians, are designed by Christ to be the salt of the earth, to purify it from corruption, and preserve it from destruction ; but if you lose your piety, and cease thus to benefit the world, you will be justly rejected by Christ, and cast out as worthless refuse. If converted men and women will not seek the salvation of others, God will certainly withhold the supplies of his grace ; and then the salt they now have will soon lose its savour, and they will be good for nothing but to prevent others from slipping, who witness their folly, degradation, and misery.

*If you lose your piety, and are of no real benefit to the world, Christ will cast you out of his favour and protection. Christ will not bless you with his presence, and favour,*



and protection, if you lose your purity, your faith, your love, your zeal, and are of no service to the souls of your fellow-men. He made this known to the Churches of Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea. There was much good in the church at Ephesus; yet Jesus said, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love;" and he declares that he would remove all the privileges of that church, unless it repented. The churches at Pergamos and Thyatira had kept the faith of Christ, and had not denied his name; but they tolerated eating things sacrificed to idols, and fornication. He commands the first of these churches to "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth;" and of the ringleader in sin, and her wicked associates, in the latter church, he says, "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you, according to your works." In the church at Sardis there were a few who had not defiled their garments: these he promises to bless, and own in the last day; but the rest, who had only a name to live and were dead, he sharply reproves, and says, "If thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." To the church at Laodicea, which appears not to have had one redeeming quality, but was completely careless about the glory of God and the salvation of precious souls, he says, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Hear this, ye lukewarm professors, who are at ease in Zion, settled on your lees, doing nothing for Christ and the souls of men: there was some redeeming quality in all the other churches, though there was much to grieve him in all the seven churches of Asia, excepting Smyrna and Philadelphia; but in Laodicea there is nothing to reprove but self-complacency and lukewarmness; yet, these are so odious to Christ, that he declares he will cast the Laodiceans out of his mouth. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion;" for Jesus says, "I will search Jerusalem with lighted candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees; that say in their heart, The Lord will not do

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good, neither will he do evil." "Because thou art luke-  
warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my  
mouth." We affectionately, earnestly, solemnly warn all  
who are not labouring to save souls of the imminent danger  
of utter rejection by Christ. If your criminal indiffer-  
ence to the salvation of the souls of men continues, Christ  
will cast you out of his favour and protection; and then  
your adversary the devil, who, as a roaring lion, walketh  
about, seeking whom he may devour, will be sure to lay hold  
of you and destroy you.

*If you lose your religion, and neglect the salvation of the  
souls of your fellow-men, Christ will cast you out of his  
family, and disown you at the last day.* "The just shall  
live by his faith; but if he draw back, my soul shall have  
no pleasure in him." "He that overcometh, the same shall  
be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name  
out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my  
Father, and before his angels."—Rev. iii. 5. But, "Whom-  
soever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and my words, in  
this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the  
Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of  
his Father with the holy angels."—Mark viii. 38. How  
great are the evils presented to our view in the preceding  
verses? For God to have no pleasure in us, to have our  
names blotted out of the book of life by the hand of Jesus,  
and to have the Saviour ashamed of us at the last day, are  
evils incalculable. These evils will come upon all those  
who lose the savour of piety, and do no good to the souls of  
men. What but fear, and shame, and backsliding, prevent  
us from attempting the salvation of the souls of men? Chris-  
tians are either afraid of worldly loss, or bodily injury; or  
they are afraid to speak, on Christ's behalf, to their ungodly  
fellow-creatures; or, they have begun to draw back from  
Christ, and feel not the value of souls, when they strive  
not to benefit men by their prayers, conversations, example,  
and efforts. In many cases, it is shame alone that prevents  
individuals from attempting to glorify Christ and save immor-  
tal souls; but it matters not what the reason is, the Saviour  
is displeased with all who manifest not the savour of his  
knowledge in every place: and will, if they repent not, and  
bring not forth fruits worthy repentance, blot the names of  
such out of the book of life: be ashamed of them in the day  
of judgment, and deny them a place in heaven. Ponder  
this solemn fact, all ye who have entirely lost the savour of

piety, or who are losing it, as fast as you can, by your lukewarmness.

*Unless we retain the savour of piety, and employ all our energies for the glory of Christ, and the spiritual benefit of men, Christ will certainly cast us into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* On this awful subject we shall say but little. Paul evidently laboured, with all his might, to prevent so horrible a catastrophe; hence, he says, when alluding to the earnest efforts of the Grecian racers and combatants, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest, that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away." A cast away was one disapproved by the judge of the games, as not having fairly deserved the prize. Paul dreaded being rejected by Christ, the Judge of all, at the last; and, hence, he performed every duty, and used every means, so that this might not be the case. And if Paul, wise, holy, useful as he was, in a preeminent degree, dreaded being a cast away at last, how much reason have we to dread this consummation of woe. There is not the least doubt but we shall be cast into hell, if we lose our piety, and die in a backsliding state. Hear what the Holy Ghost says, by Ezekiel, "But, when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All the righteousness he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in the sin which he hath sinned, in them shall he die."—xviii. 24. Nor is there the least doubt, if we are careless about the salvation of souls, but we shall lose our piety and perish; for it is written, "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gathered where I have not strawed; Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that

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hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matth. xxv. 24—30. Why was the man cast into outer darkness? Had he received any grace? He had. Why, then, was he cast into outer darkness? Because he had not improved his talent. He was not cast into hell for his immoralities; but because he had done no good with the gift, the means, and the opportunities which God had placed in his care and at his disposal. Let those who are doing no good look at the parable until they feel that they must live for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, or be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What a curse! "Cast out and trodden underfoot!" Avoid it, my brethren, by labouring with all your might to glorify God, and benefit your fellow-men. Instead of vainly supposing that you cannot lose grace, and the power and disposition to do good, dread this awful catastrophe, and use every means to prevent it.

What are you doing for the salvation of men? Are you seeking their salvation? If not, your religion is vain. You are deluded in supposing that you are in God's favour, if the religion you profess does not constrain you to seek the salvation of the "dead in trespasses and sins." When there is grace in the heart, it will be manifested in fervent prayer, and zealous efforts for the conversion of the ungodly. Christ declares, that his people "Are the salt of the earth;" and he made this declaration because he knew that his love would induce its possessors to seek the conversion of immortal souls; therefore, if you are doing nothing for the conversion of your fellow-men, you have every reason to suspect that your hearts are not right with God: that you have no genuine religion.

We may not be equally fitted *for*, and equally useful *in*, every department of Christian labour; but we can all pray for the conversion of the ungodly; we can all set before them a good example, and we may all do something in the way of conversation and personal effort. If you do what you can, cheerfully and constantly, Christ accepts the service; but if you are doing nothing, you had better seek, at once, the conversion of your own souls.

To you, who are doing what you can to save souls, we would say, in the language of the inspired apostle, "Be

ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

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### DISCOURSE III.

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#### THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND SUPPLICATIONS NEEDED TO SAVE SOULS.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."—ZECHARIAH xii. 10.

Christians should search diligently the Holy Scriptures, in order to ascertain correctly the work which the Holy Spirit has to perform, in connexion with the preaching of the gospel, before ever any souls can be saved. Had we greater knowledge of what the Scriptures teach, on this highly important point, we should know where our great strength lies, and should be stirred up to unceasing prayer, incessant vigilance, and repeated acts of faith, to secure the necessary aid of the Holy Spirit; so that we might never suffer defeat in our efforts to increase the triumphs of Christ. Many, we doubt not, have had to cry, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" because they have depended too much on the means used for the conversion of sinners, and too little on the Spirit's aid; and, hence, a failure, a miserable failure, has succeeded the vigorous efforts which they have put forth for the salvation of souls. On the other hand, some have looked so much to the Spirit's work, as to depend entirely on him to accomplish the salvation of souls, without their agency; therefore, they have not laboured zealously in disseminating the knowledge of Christ crucified, in warning men of sin, in exhorting them to forsake their evil courses, and beseeching them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God; hence, they have seen no saving good accomplished, and have been found giving way to idle complainings about the lowliness of religion in the Church, and the abounding of iniquity in the world.

Let us guard against these highly injurious and dangerous extremes. Remember, "It is ours to labour; it is God's to bless." "Go work to-day in my vineyard," remembering, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." God does not ordinarily convert sinners

without human agency ; and it is certain that Christians cannot convert sinners without the Holy Spirit's all-sufficient aid.

I. The Spirit promised.

II. The effect produced upon the minds of sinners by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

III. The encouragement we have, as Christians, to hope for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to succeed our labours for the Salvation of Souls.

I. The Spirit promised.

The Holy Spirit is termed, in the fifty-first Psalm, the free or liberal Spirit of God ; because he is free in His operations, liberal in the bestowment of His favours, and may be obtained by all who ask for Him. In the eighth of Romans, He is called the Spirit of fear and bondage, because he improves, or rather convinces, ungodly men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and thus produces fear and bondage in their souls. In the same chapter, He is styled the Spirit of Adoption, because he gives to every penitent believer in Christ the temper of a child of God, assures him of his adoption into the family of God, and causes him, by a free instinct, to cry, " Abba Father." " Where the Spirit of the Lord is," as the Spirit of adoption, " there is liberty. Liberty from sin, liberty to do the will of God, liberty of access unto the throne of grace at all times, and under all circumstances ; but it is not our intention to describe the whole of the Spirit's work. We call your attention to the Holy Spirit,

AS THE SPIRIT OF GRACE.

Grace not only signifies unmerited favour, kindness, love ; but it also signifies the favourable and almighty influence of God upon the mind of man, and the blessed effects of that influence. " My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."—2 Cor. xii. 9. It is abundantly evident that the Holy Spirit is the Author of that grace, influence, or power, that upholds the believer under his infirmities, and carries him on to the performance of all the will of God ; and it is also abundantly certain, that He is the Author of that grace which changes the sinner's heart and the sinner's



state. The sinner is blinded by the god of this world; he is a slave to sin, a child of the devil, an heir of hell, and is all his life-time subject to bondage through fear of death. The Spirit, however, can enlighten his mind, deliver him from the trammels of the world, the flesh, and the devil: give him power to conquer his foes, and power to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. "God hath not given unto us the Spirit of fear; but of love, of power, and of a sound mind." The Holy Spirit can give the sinner a sound mind, that is, a mind free from spiritual madness and spiritual disease, and make him an heir of God, and a joint heir with our Lord Jesus Christ. You all must acknowledge, that the Spirit of Grace is much needed in our congregations, in our cities, towns, and villages, yea, in our world, in order to turn our fellow-creatures from their wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts, that they may return unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon them, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon. The Spirit promised in the text is the Author and Bestower of Grace of every kind, and in every degree.

#### HE IS THE SPIRIT OF SUPPLICATIONS.

The word *supplications* signifies prayer earnestly and repeatedly offered. The Holy Spirit produces a mighty influence on the hearts of sinners; hence, when God spoke by Jeremiah of restoring the Jews from Babylonish captivity, He declared that they should come with weeping and supplications. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them."—Jer. xxxi. 9. "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant, which shall not be forgotten."—Jer. l. 4, 5.

This is just what we want, as Christians, to see in our day: sinners seeking the Lord: coming to join themselves to Christ the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, which shall not be forgotten. For this purpose we build our churches, support our ministers, keep up public worship, circulate bibles and tracts, establish sabbath schools, and send our missionaries where Christ is not preached; but all will be of no avail unless the Spirit of Grace and Supplications is poured out. He is the Author of all those humble, earnest, and repeated petitions which convinced sinners present to God for mercy in the



name of Jesus Christ, and which all true believers so ardently desire to hear sinners pouring forth. He is the Author of the agonizing supplications of sinners; for he reveals to them their ignorance, guilt, pollution, bondage, and danger; and directs them to look to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, for deliverance. The Holy Spirit inclines sinners to pray, and instructs and assists them in the performance of the duty. Guided and assisted by the Holy Ghost, they mightily cry to God to make Christ unto them, "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," that they may be enabled to glory in the Lord. We cannot, by any means, be successful in saving souls, unless the Spirit of the living God blesses our efforts; for sinners are so blind to their duty, so insensible of their danger, so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, that the presentation of truth to their minds in the clearest and most forcible manner, will never convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; nor move them to penitence, to prayer, to faith in Christ, unless the Holy Spirit effectually works with the truth, and gives them the spirit of bondage to fear. Then, but not till then, will they come with weeping and supplications to the throne of grace. As the Spirit of Grace and Supplications, He is promised

#### TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID, AND TO THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM.

Before the Spirit of grace and supplications is poured out upon the world, He is first given to the church in his sanctifying operations, and as the Spirit of supplications, preparing the people of God to enter heartily into the work of saving souls, giving them such love to souls, and such an ardent desire for their salvation, that they cannot rest until sinners are saved. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered." As Christians, we especially need the help of the Spirit in our supplications for the ungodly. We are bound to pray for all men; yea, to pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit; and we are required to do this, because our intercessions for the ungodly avail much with God. But where is the saint, when desiring above all things to intercede successfully with God for the conversion of sinners, that has not, many times, felt at a loss what to pray for on their behalf; but, at such times, the Spirit has helped his infirmities, and led him to pray in a

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manner that has deeply affected sinners, and to pray for those very things which they have most needed. And when we have prayed in the Holy Ghost, or, as the Holy Spirit has led us on to pray for the ungodly, the very sinners we have prayed for have been overpowered, yea, confounded, by our prayers, and led to cry for mercy. Their feelings, their wants, their desires, have been so fully expressed by us, and pleaded so earnestly before God, that they have trembled under our prayers : yielded to the blessed influence which has been brought upon them in answer to prayer ; and have shortly experienced a new birth, a new creation, a new life. All that we want, as Christians, to enable us to feel aright and pray aright for sinners, is the Spirit of grace and supplications ; and, in this text, he is promised in this character to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

*He is promised to the house of David, or to the great men in the Church.* The preachers, the leaders, and the stewards are no more, and no better, than the grace of God makes them ; and if they are to be successful, in the work of saving souls, they must have an abundant measure of the Spirit of grace and supplications. Before God blesses a church with a great revival of his work, it is generally the case, that he pours out his Spirit of grace and supplication first on the house of David, on the leading men in the church, and it is a good sign that the church is about to prosper, and sinners are about to be converted, when the officers in the church begin to feel deeply on behalf of the ungodly, and to labour wisely, zealously, faithfully for their conversion. O that all the leading men, in all the churches of Christ, were filled with the Spirit of grace and supplications ! then there would be no unholy contests for power ; no lording it over God's heritage ; no striving to blend the spiritual kingdom of our blessed Redeemer with the kingdoms of this world ; but their aim would be the purity and prosperity of the church, and the conversion of the world to Christ. We earnestly exhort the leading men in the churches of Christ to seek a larger measure of the Spirit of grace and supplications, so that they may properly lead on the people of God in their efforts to save souls. You have the promise of the Spirit. Be ye filled with the Spirit.

*He is promised also to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, or to the membership of the Church.* Matthew Henry justly observes, " On the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the common people ; for the operations of the Spirit are the same upon

the mean and weak Christians, that they are upon the strong and more grown. The inhabitants of Jerusalem cannot influence public affairs by their powers and policies, so as the great men of the house of David may, yet may do good service by their prayers; and, therefore, upon them shall the Spirit be poured out. The Church is Jerusalem: the heavenly Jerusalem. All true believers, that have their conversation in heaven, are inhabitants of this Jerusalem; and to them this promise belongs, God will pour his Spirit upon them. This is that earnest which all that believe in Christ shall receive: thus they are sanctified: thus they are sealed. 2. What these blessings are. I will pour upon them my spirit. That includes all good things, as it qualifies us for the favour of God and all his other gifts. He will pour out the Spirit. (1.) As a *Spirit of grace*, to sanctify, and to make us gracious. (2.) As a *Spirit of supplications*, inclining us to, instructing and assisting us in, the duty of prayer. Wherever the Spirit is given, as a Spirit of grace, he is given as a Spirit of supplication. Wherever he is a Spirit of adoption, he teacheth to cry, Abba Father. As soon as ever Paul was converted, Behold he prays.—Acts ix. 11. You may as soon find a living man without breath, as a saint without prayer. There is a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit of prayer now, under the gospel, than there was under the law; and the further the work of sanctification is carried in us, the better is the work of supplication carried on by us." The members of churches cannot be successful, to that extent they ought to be, in saving souls, unless they are filled with the Spirit of grace and supplications; and, therefore, it is the imperative duty of every private member to seek, with all his might, a greater measure of the Spirit: yea, to be filled with the Spirit. Get blessed, greatly blessed, with the Spirit of grace and supplications, and you will be a blessing, a great blessing, to your fellow-men; but if you are straitened in your own bowels, and in your own efforts, remember the Spirit of the Lord is not straitened. And if you do not receive him in his fulness, the blame rests upon your own heads. "For if ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Get more of the Spirit, and do not cease praying for the Spirit of grace and supplications, until your soul enters so fully into the work of saving your fellow-men, that you will be frequently found, "Offering up prayers and supplications, with strong

crying and tears, unto him that is able to save them from death." Then your prayers will be heard, your labours will be successful ; and precious souls will be delivered from going down into the pit, from which a great ransom cannot deliver them.

II. The effects produced upon the minds of the ungodly, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

BY THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT, THE ATTENTION OF SINNERS IS ARRESTED.

Their thoughts are at once turned to religion, and fixed upon those things which belong to their peace. Those, who before were the most frivolous, full of levity, whose attention you could not keep to the subject of religion for the shortest possible space of time, now become serious and thoughtful ; and the thrilling subject of religion occupies their most anxious and constant thoughts. Those, also, who were careless about their souls ; who could listen to the most interesting themes without interest ; to the most important and solemn sermons without either anxiety or fear, are awakened from their guilty slumbers, and their thoughts are fixed upon their guilt, wretchedness, and danger. When the Spirit is poured out, as the Spirit of grace and supplications, there is a commotion among the churches : the people of God, having their hearts opened and their tongues loosened, begin to pray to God, and exhort sinners in earnest. The news flies through the city, the town, the village, or the settlement, and careless neglecters of salvation, miserable backsliders, self-righteous moralists, and abandoned profligates, flock to the house of prayer, either to look on or to scoff, and upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication descends, and they begin to cry for mercy. So it has ever been ; so it ever will be. It was so in the days of the apostles. When the Spirit was first poured out, there was a commotion in the church ; the followers of Christ began to speak with new tongues, and to declare to every man in his own tongue the wonderful works of God ; then the multitude came together and were confounded ; for the sacred narrative informs us, " Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans ? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born ? Par-

thians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya and Cyrene; and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine."—Acts ii. 6—13.

Thus, by the outpouring of the Spirit upon the followers of Christ, the attention of sinners was arrested, and there was a commotion among the ungodly. It was so in the days of the Wesleys and of Whitefield, and has been so in every great revival of religion that has taken place at any period of time, or in any quarter of the globe. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude, that in any and every church, where the members, by earnest prayer and simple faith, secure the abundant effusions of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of grace and supplications, the members of the church will begin to speak, if not with new tongues, yet with new life, and with such increased energy, that the attention of sinners will be arrested; there will be a commotion among them, and they will crowd to the house of God, either to enquire "What is the meaning of this?" or else to mock. And it is a matter of incalculable importance to get the attention of sinners fully aroused on the subject of religion; for, if they never think of religion, they will never be convinced of its truth, its value, and necessity, and, consequently, will never be led to seek its possession. There is hope, great hope, of the souls of men being saved, when their attention is aroused and directed to religious truth; but there is none whatever so long as they remain in a state of criminal indifference.

BY THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND SUPPLICATIONS, THE THOUGHTS OF THE UNCONVERTED ARE FIXED UPON THE RIGHT OBJECT, VIZ., THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

"And they shall look on me whom they have pierced." "That this relates to the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, and to his being pierced by the soldier's spear, we have the authority of the inspired apostle John in affirming; and the application agrees with the opinion of some of the ancient Jews, who interpret it of Messiah, the son of David, as Moses Hadason, on Genesis xxviii., though Jarchi and Abarbanel

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refer it to the death of Messiah, the son of Joseph, whom, they say, was to be the suffering Messiah, while the former is to be the triumphant Messiah."—*Bagster's Comprehensive Bible*.

The beloved apostle John says, "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."—John xix. 32—37.

The Psalmist, when speaking of Christ, says, "They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me."—Psalm xxii. 16, 17. And, by the outpouring of the Spirit, the ungodly are found looking at Christ crucified. They, having their attention directed to Christ, by the ministry of reconciliation, as the "Author and finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame," the Holy Spirit so impresses their minds with the cruel death of Christ, that they are found looking and staring at the Saviour: pondering the extremity of his sufferings, the ignominy of his death, and the dreadful causes of those sufferings and that death. Beholding, in thought, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, they dwell, with agonising astonishment, on the mangled body of the innocent Saviour, until the dreadful truth flashes on their minds, "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him;" and, like as a murderer is troubled wherever he goes, who mentally sees the struggles and agonies of the innocent man he murdered, to gratify his revenge, his cupidity, his jealousy: who hears the voice of the murdered man's blood in every wind that blows, and every sound he hears, so do sinners now see, wherever they go, "Him whom they have pierced," and hear his voice saying, "I suffered this from you." Again, again, and yet again, do they mentally gaze at that blessed head, which was torn with thorns, and those sacred hands and feet, which were pierced with nails, and that bleeding side, into



which the soldier's spear was thrust, and they feel that they have pierced him, inasmuch as their sins WERE the cause of his death, and ARE the grief of his soul : they feel, that, by their sins, they have crucified him afresh, and put him to an open shame. They are by this sight fully convinced that they are sinners, and that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God. And now, instead of laying the blame of the death of Christ altogether upon the wicked Jews, saying, "If we had lived in their day, and been in their place, we would not have crucified the Lord Jesus Christ," they all feel that they are equally blameable with the Jews. And in answer to the question,

"Who, who my Saviour, this hath done?  
Who could thy sacred body wound?  
No guilt thy spotless heart hath known,  
No guile hath in thy lips been found!"

They individually reply,

"I—I, alas! have done the deed,  
'Tis I, thy sacred flesh have torn;  
My sins have caused thee, Lord, to bleed,  
Pointed the nail and fix'd the thorn."

The sight of a crucified Christ, which the Spirit gives them, convinces them of the fact of sin, the enormous guilt of sin, and the extreme danger of eternal punishment to which it has exposed every sinner. And nothing whatever can convince a man of the evil and danger of sin but the right apprehension of the greatness of the Saviour's sufferings, and the full conviction that sin was the cause of all the agony he endured; and to produce this conviction, the Holy Spirit fixes the thoughts of sinner's "on him whom they have pierced."

BY THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT, THE HEARTS OF SINNERS ARE PROPERLY AFFECTED.

"And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and they shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." This part of our text expresses two ideas, first, the cause of penitent sinners' grief, and, secondly, the greatness of that grief.

As to the cause of their grief, it is the pierced Saviour: "They mourn for him." They are truly sorry at the sight of the Saviour on the cross. The genuine sorrow of penitent souls flows from the believing sight of a pierced Saviour. The declaration in this text was specially fulfilled after Peter's sermon on the day of pentecost. At the close of his

sermon, he said, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The result of his sermon is thus stated: "Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were filled with sorrow when they were convinced that Christ, whom they had crucified, was actually the Messiah. The remembrance of their barbarous treatment of him, and his cruel death, would now pierce their hearts like a dagger. This declaration is fulfilled now in all sinners, who have their minds turned, by the Holy Spirit, to the contemplation of him whom they have pierced. They look to Christ, and mourn for his suffering: mourn on account of their variety and their extremity; but especially on account of their own sins, which have caused them. Looking, steadfastly and steadily, upon Christ crucified, will make any man, unless he is hardened past feeling, sorrow for sin after a godly sort, and work in his heart repentance unto salvation, which needeth not to be repented of.

The declaration expresses the greatness of their grief. "As one mourneth for his only son." In Judea they used to mourn for an only son covered with sackcloth, with earth on their heads, with the most piteous cries, and piercing lamentations. When Christ entered into the city of Nain, "Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." Her sorrow was great, her only stay was gone, she was desolate indeed; but Jesus comforted her troubled spirit, healed her broken heart, and wiped her weeping eyes; for he touched the bier, and said, "Young man, arise;" and thus restored him to life, and to his mother's tender embraces. "And shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." The first-born son is highly prized. Jacob called his first-born son, "My might, and the beginning of my strength: the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power." And, hence, so bitter is the grief of many, on the loss of their first-born, that they scarcely can weep; weeping would be a relief to their wounded hearts. In conversation with a mother one day, who had lost her only son, and her first-born, she exclaimed to us, in all the agony of grief, "If I could weep, I should obtain relief; but I



cannot weep;" and she wandered up and down the room like one distracted. Perhaps some, who may read these pages, may, like the writer, have lost a son, an only son, and know the greatness of the sorrow referred to in this text. Be assured, then, that the grief of sinners, for having pierced Christ, is equally great, when they are fully convinced that their sins have crucified the Son of God. Some convinced sinners, like Peter, weep bitterly; and that man must have a heart of stone who cannot weep with them. Others, however, have grief too big for tears—too great for utterance: they are lost in wretchedness; and it would be a positive relief could they only ease their broken hearts by weeping. "The sorrow of penitent sinners," says a good author, "is like the mourning of a parent for the death of a beloved child. They shall mourn for sin, as one *mourneth for an only son*, in whose grave the hopes of his family are buried; and shall be *inwardly in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born*, as the Egyptians were, when there was a cry throughout all the land for the death of their first-born. The sorrow of children, for the death of their parents, is sometimes counterfeited, is often small, and soon wears off, and is forgotten; but the sorrow of parents for a child, for a son, for an only son, for a first-born, is natural, sincere, unforced, and unaffected—it is secret and lasting: such are the sorrows of a true penitent, flowing purely from love to Christ, above any other." "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." This mourning for Christ will give place to joy; for Christ comforts all that mourn for having crucified him; and he will speedily "Appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Such, then, are the blessed effects of the outpouring of the Spirit. The attention of the ungodly is arrested; their minds are fixed on the death of Christ; their hearts are filled with great and godly sorrow, which issues in the conversion of their immortal souls.

III. The encouragement we have, as Christians, to expect the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to succeed our labours in the salvation of souls.

GOD HAS PROMISED THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN HIS RICHEST EFFUSIONS, BOTH TO JEWS AND GENTILES, TO ENLIGHTEN, REGENERATE, AND SAVE THEM.

Let us glance at a few of these promises: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight

in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."—Prov. i. 22, 23. "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of the Lord."—Isaiah xlv. 3, 4, 5. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in these days will I pour out my Spirit."—Joel ii. 28, 29.

These glorious predictions clearly point out that God will bestow his Spirit, to make wise the simple, to reprove the scorner, and to remove the folly of wicked men; that he will pour him out to satiate the souls of the thirsty with living water; to raise up speedily a people for Christ, who shall voluntarily and joyfully enter into covenant engagements with him; yea, to raise up a people who shall be able and willing to speak on his behalf, at all times and under all circumstances. These predictions were fulfilled when Jesus was glorified:—

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on Christ should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because Christ was not yet glorified.)"—John vii. 37, 38, 39.

When Jesus was glorified, then this promise, together with the Old Testament predictions, were fulfilled:—

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."—Acts ii. 32, 33. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy

Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."—Acts xi. 15—18.

The first of these passages refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, on the day of pentecost, upon the Jews in Jerusalem, when three thousand souls were converted to God and added to the church. The second passage refers to a company of Gentiles, who were gathered to hear the gospel in the house of Cornelius, a devout Gentile, who lived at Cesarea. And as soon as Peter preached to them the gospel, the Holy Spirit was poured upon them in all his fulness. The Spirit, according to the promise of God, enlightened, regenerated, and saved all those who received the gospel of Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles.

CHRIST HAS PROMISED THAT THIS SPIRIT SHALL REMAIN WITH THE CHURCH UNTIL THE END OF TIME, TO SUCCEED HER EFFORTS FOR THE CONVERSION OF SOULS.

When Isaiah predicted the coming of Christ, and the covenant which he should enter into with the church, he did it in these words :

"And the Redeemer shall come unto Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."—Isaiah lix. 20, 21. Ezekiel also predicts : "Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."—Ezekiel xxxix. 29.

In accordance with these ancient predictions, Christ made the following gracious promises to his church, before his removal from earth to heaven :—

"If ye love me, keep my commandments: And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you."—John xiv. 15—18. "But

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now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."—John xvi. 5—11. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* Amen."—Matth. xxvii. 18—20.

In these precious promises, which ought to be engraven on the hearts of God's people, the Spirit is promised as the Spirit of truth, as the Comforter of God's people, as the Convincer of the world that lieth in the wicked one; and he is to abide with the church of God for ever; yea, to the end of the world. Wherever the people of God send ministers of the gospel of Jesus, Christ promises always to be with them. Here, then, is our great encouragement, to expect the Spirit's all-sufficient aid, to prosper our work of saving souls. The above-cited promises of Christ are in full force at this moment. We have the Spirit, and rest assured Christ cannot lie; therefore, when we pray for the Spirit to descend, in all his fulness, as the Spirit of grace and supplications, we are only praying for that which Christ has promised, and which he assuredly will impart, in answer to faith and prayer.

THE REVIVALS OF RELIGION WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN MODERN TIMES; AND THE INCREASED DESIRE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD, IN OUR DAY, FOR THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT, AFFORD US ABUNDANT ENCOURAGEMENT TO EXPECT THE SPIRIT IN ALL HIS CONVINCING, CONVERTING, AND SANCTIFYING POWER.

The revivals which have taken place in modern times, have taken place through the increased measure of spiritual influence which the united faith and prayer of God's people have secured, in connection with the preaching of the word.

Let any man read of the revivals in America, or in Europe, and he will find that they have taken place, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Is God less anxious to pour out his Spirit now, than he was only a few years ago? certainly not. The men whom God has honoured with revivals, within the last hundred years, had no miraculous gifts: they were undoubtedly good men, full of faith and the Holy Ghost; but they had no miraculous endowments. What they were, we may be, if we will only diligently seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, as they were. The indications of God's willingness to pour out his Spirit, in rich abundance, we see in the increased desire which exists among us, as a people, for an increased conformity to the mind of Christ, for increasing prosperity in the church, and in the droppings of a shower, already experienced, by which the saints have been quickened, and some sinners have been converted. And if we are only be faithful to God and Christ, and the souls of men, God will sprinkle clean water upon us, as his people, and cleanse us from all our idols and filthiness, and he will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; for,

"Lo! the promise of a shower,  
Drops already from above;  
But the Lord will shortly pour  
All the Spirit of his love."

All that is wanted, on the part of the church, to secure the Spirit, in all his saving operations, is deep humiliation for past unfaithfulness; the removal of every thing opposed to the will of God; and earnest, believing prayer, for the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ. Let the following pointed passages, from God's Word, be seriously considered, and they will at once point out what we have to do, to get the Spirit, and secure the conversion of men:

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."—Isaiah lix. 1, 2. "O thou that art named The house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?"—Micah ii. 7. "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock."—Ezek. xxxvii. 37. "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have rob-

bed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, and see if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—Mal. iii. 9, 10.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—Luke ii. 13.

"Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."—James iv. 2, 3.

These passages abundantly show, that want of piety, want of liberality, want of prayer, and want of brotherly love, among the people of God, are the great causes of a want of prosperity in churches, and the very reason why the Spirit is not poured out to enlighten, convert, and save the ungodly. Christian brethren, of all denominations, let us put away from us our worldliness, our niggardliness, our prayerlessness, and our bigotry: then God will pour out his Spirit, and the ends of the earth shall see his salvation. Let us seek forgiveness for the past, and obtain a fresh baptism of the Spirit ourselves, and then God, even our own God, will bless us, and make us a blessing. We would earnestly exhort all God's people to read, with deep reflection and earnest prayer, the sixty-fourth chapter of Isaiah.

Let us also, beloved brethren, think more and converse more about the Spirit's work, and the glorious results which follow His outpouring; and then shall we encourage each other to pray more frequently, more earnestly, and more believingly, in our closets, in our families, and in our churches, for the Lord to pour out his Spirit, as the Spirit of grace and supplications. Let us, above all, be careful to make sinners feel that they have no excuse for living in sin; that Christ was pierced to save them, and that the Spirit has been given to convince them of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; and that he would become to them the Spirit of grace and supplications, if they did not wickedly and stubbornly resist his strivings with them. We must guard against the fatal error which some fall into, when they produce the impression upon the minds of sinners that they are poor unfortunate creatures, that cannot help remaining in a state of alienation from God. This is a false impression. We must counteract it, and make sinners feel, in all our con-

versations with them, that they are resisting the good Spirit of God, and will not come unto Christ that they might have life. May God pour out his Spirit in rich abundance upon us all.

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## DISCOURSE IV.

### A REVIVAL OF GOD'S WORK NEEDED IN THE CHURCH, BEFORE MANY SOULS WILL BE SAVED.

"Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."—PSALM XC. 16, 17.

This is a very interesting and solemn Psalm, and when over read, makes a deep impression upon the thoughtful and pious mind. It is generally supposed to have been composed by Moses, when all the generation of the Israelites, who had offended God, were sentenced to fall in the wilderness, at the age of seventy or eighty years, except Moses, Caleb, and Joshua. (See 13th and 14th chapters of the Book of Numbers.) Moses, filled with deepest solemnity and sorrow, at the thought of all those dying in the wilderness, who came out of Egypt with him, and were twenty years of age when they left the house of bondage, composes this Psalm, in which he forcibly points out the eternity of God; feelingly expiates on the frailty of man, and the brevity of human life; candidly confesses that the sins of the people had justly incurred the heavy displeasure of God; earnestly prays to God to teach the people so to number their days, as to apply their hearts unto wisdom; importunately beseeches God to return unto Israel, and satisfy them early with his mercy, that they may rejoice and be glad while they did live; and concludes the whole with the nervous and beautiful prayer, for a revival of God's work, which we are to have for a text this morning: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and they glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

Many an aged servant of God, who, like pious Moses, has laboured for years to benefit God's people and extend God's glory, but who has seen but little real piety in the church, and whose heart has often been deeply pained by the frequent backslidings and murmurings of God's Israel, has been heard to say, in prospect of speedy dissolution, "I could die

in peace and triumph if I could only see a genuine and extensive revival of God's work. I have prayed to God often to bless his church with a revival: I know he will do it; and if it would but take place before I die, I should rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We doubt not but this was the earnest desire of Moses, the man of God, when he uttered this prayer. Some, before now, have had the impression produced upon their minds, that they would not see death until they have seen the church of God revived and extended; and when they have seen it, they have said, with good old Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The prayer of all who love God is, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children," &c. The subject of the text is, prayer for a revival in the church of God. The Israelites, for whom Moses here prays, were the Church of God at that time. They were in a sinful, wretched, dead, state. The curse of God was upon Israel; and he had sworn, in his wrath, that all of mature years among them, excepting Caleb and Joshua, should not enter into his rest. True piety was at a very low ebb among them, therefore Moses felt the necessity of uttering this prayer. We must copy the example of Moses, or the work of God will not be greatly revived among us. Consider,

I. The blessings specified in this text, which are greatly needed, in the church of God, to enable us to save souls.

II. The means to be employed to gain them.

III. The necessity of an immediate use of the means required.

I. The blessings specified in the text, which are greatly needed, in the church of God, to enable us to save souls.

*Moses prays for a revival of God's work in the church.*

"Let thy work appear," means just what Habakkuk meant, when he said, "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." When Habakkuk heard from God's mouth, how long the people of God were to be oppressed for their sins by the Chaldeans, he was afraid lest the church should be wasted and destroyed, and therefore prays to God to preserve it alive, and revive it in the midst of the years.

"Revive thy work," i. e. the church of God, which has been formed by him, and formed for him; let not that sink, go back, and come to nothing. And when Moses heard that all that came out of Egypt, over twenty years of age, were to fall in the wilderness, he might well cry, as Habakkuk did after him, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants." The Jews had sinned, grievously sinned, and Moses wanted the quickening, pardoning, cleansing work of God again to appear unto his servants, that though *they did fall in the wilderness*, they might not be eternally lost; and that though *they wandered in the wilderness for forty years*, they might not be without visible proofs of his being in the midst of them. And if you consult the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Numbers, you will find, that in answer to the prayer of Moses, God did let his work appear unto his servants. He pardoned their sins, and led them to mourn greatly on account thereof.

And do we not need in the church, in our day, the appearance of God's quickening, pardoning, sanctifying grace, to make us fit to labour rightly for God, and the salvation of the souls of men? We cannot successfully work for God unless he first works upon us, and gives us both the power and the disposition to perform his good pleasure. Before ever we can fully answer the designs of our blessed Redeemer, in calling us by his grace, and putting us into the church, we must be far holier, and far more laborious than what we now are. Can the world be converted with our imperfect piety and deficient zeal? Oh, no! We must shake ourselves from the dust, and put on our beautiful garments, and put on strength, and no more receive among us the uncircumcised and unclean, before we can ever bring the world to the feet of Jesus. A revival is needed in the church.

Look into the churches now existing, and there you will see but too much need for the quickening, pardoning, cleansing grace of God. The remains of pride, unbelief, censoriousness, worldly-mindedness, spiritual-idleness, bigotry, and a host of other evils, may be found in some professing godliness; and the humility, the faith, the heavenly mindedness, the benevolence, and the zeal of all, need greatly increasing. And how are the remaining imperfections of God's children to be removed, and their graces to be perfected, but by the Almighty power of God? He must sprinkle clean water upon us, and cleanse us from all our idols and filthiness, and give us a new heart and a right spirit; and put his Spirit

within us, and write his laws upon our hearts and minds, before ever we can, as the church of God, "Look forth as the morning, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners."

Look into the world around you, and you will find among those who are called Christians, by way of distinguishing them from Jews, Mahomedans, and heathen, about as much religion as you will find in a fallen-angel. They are not only earthly and sensual, but they are devilish; for pride, malignity, revenge, and injustice, which are the leading characteristics of fallen-angels, are found reigning predominant among the unconverted. Surely the quickening, pardoning, cleansing power of God is needed to remove these abominations, and must be exerted before ever the nominal Christian world can be holy and happy. To remove every thing unholy from the church and the world, we need the outstretched arm of God; and all Christians ought to cry, with all the earnestness of their souls "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old." "Let thy work appear to thy servants." Quicken, pardon, and sanctify thy people, that thy way may be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations.

*Moses prays for the manifestation of God's glory, to produce the revival needed.*

"And thy glory unto their children." The glory of God was manifested unto Israel by a cloud. Hence, we are informed, "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."—Exodus xxiv. 15, 16, 17.

That was such an awful display of the glory of God, that the Israelites desired they might see it no more lest they should die: yea, so terrible was that sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." The Divine glory was ever exhibited to Israel by the luminous cloud, which gave a visible proof to the Israelites of the special presence of the Godhead; but it did not usually appear in so terrific a manner as it did on Mount Sinai. Whenever the glory of God appeared in the days of the children of Israel, it filled them

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with reverence, and must have excited their gratitude, love, and obedience. We apprehend, however, that Moses here refers to the moral glory of the Godhead, especially to his holiness and mercy; and this he desired the youth of Israel to behold, that they might set their hope in God, and not be as their fathers, a stubborn and perverse generation, whose heart was not right, and whose Spirit was not steadfast with God.

Under the gospel dispensation, the Lord does not display his glory in such a terrific manner as he did under the law. We have no sight of the glory of the Lord, like unto devouring fire, to fill us with dread. The glory of God, which we are to behold, is purely of a spiritual character. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is conveyed to our minds through the Lord Jesus Christ, "Who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." The apostles beheld this glory in the very person of Jesus; hence the beloved apostle John says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—John i. 14, 16, 17, 18.

The apostles, and immediate disciples of Christ, saw the glory of the Lord in the wisdom, power, justice, holiness, condescension, and mercy, displayed in the life of the Son of God; but we cannot see the glory of God even thus displayed in the person of Jesus Christ; for he has ascended to heaven, and we cannot know him after the flesh. Still, however, we can behold the glory of the Lord in a way sufficient to produce a revival of religion in our own hearts, as the people of God, and to secure the advancement of religion among the ungodly; for we may, "All, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2 Cor. iii. 17. The Bible is a mirror which faithfully reflects the glory of Christ upon the souls of all who believingly gaze upon the Redeemer. And when the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the souls of believers, as he is set forth in the glass of the Word, then are they changed into the same image, and receive a continual increase of that

glorious image of Christ, into which they are changed. Only let Christians read carefully the word of truth, pray earnestly for the Spirit to reveal the glory of Christ to their minds, and they will have such views of the wisdom, power, justice, holiness, condescension, and mercy of Christ, that their backslidings will be healed, "And they will grow as the lily, and cast forth their roots as Lebanon. Their branches shall spread, and their beauty shall be as the olive tree, and their smell as Lebanon. They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." It is astonishing what a reviving influence a sight of the glory of the Lord has upon the minds of believers: by it sterility, deformity, and offensiveness are completely removed; and fruitfulness, beauty, and fragrance are produced. Nothing is wanted in the church of God, to revive pure and undefiled religion, but a powerful manifestation of the glory of the Lord to the minds of believers.

And the manifestation of the glory of the Lord is all that is needed to convince and convert the ungodly. When the glory of Christ is revealed to the hearts of sinners, by the Word and Spirit of God, they loathe themselves, they confess their guilt, they mourn over their pollutions, they bewail their wretchedness, they dread the punishment to which they are exposed, they cast themselves upon the atonement of Christ, and with strong crying and tears, secure the quickening, pardoning, and sanctifying grace of God. Nothing else but the manifestation of the glory of the Lord will ever produce these blessed effects upon sinners; and, therefore, if we wish to see souls saved, our fervent and constant prayer to God, in the name of Jesus, must be, "Send the glory:" "Let thy glory appear," so conspicuously, that sinners may see it in that manner, and feel it to that degree, that they may never rest until they are changed into the image of Christ.

Now, do we not need a more striking manifestation of the glory of the Lord, in our day, to revive the piety of the saints, and to secure the conversion of sinners? How few Christians are as fully alive to God, as truly devoted to Christ, as truly in earnest to save souls as they ought to be; how few are as fruitful, as beautiful, as fragrant, as they must be, before ever they can bring great glory to God, great numbers to Christ, and great and lasting good to their fellow-men. O we need, greatly need, the manifestation of God's glory, to revive the graces, and abundantly increase the piety of the saints. And do we not need such a manifestation of God's

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glory to convince and convert sinners? How very few do we see fully convinced of sin, and soundly converted from sin! How very seldom are we called to mingle our tears and prayers with the tears and prayers of converted, penitent sinners; and how very seldom have we to rejoice with the rejoicing sinner, who has found peace and joy through believing. Millions of sinners, unpardoned, uncleansed, unsaved, live on this earth. Hundreds live in this town. Numbers hear the word of God within these walls: yet how few are converted. Do we not then need, greatly need, the manifestation of God's glory, so that these sinners may be aroused, convicted, and savingly converted? We do. Let thy work then, O God, appear to thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. O thou who at first caused the light to shine out of darkness, shine into the hearts of thy people, and shine into the hearts of the ungodly, and give them the light of the knowledge of thy glory, in the face of Jesus Christ, that believers may become more like Christ, and that sinners may be converted unto thee.

*Moses prays for the beauty of the Lord our God to be put upon us, that we may be prepared to sustain the revival needed.*

The beauty of the Lord our God is moral beauty. "Thou art glorious in holiness." "How great is his goodness and how great is his beauty?" The beauty of the Lord our God consists in knowledge, righteousness, (or benevolence,) and true holiness. Adam had this beauty when created: for he was wise and holy, benevolent and happy; but he lost the image of God by his fall, and became ignorant, impure, selfish, and miserable. And he has pro-created a race of beings in the likeness of his fallen nature; for,

"When Adam sinned, through all his race  
The dire contagion spread;  
Sickness and death, and deep disgrace,  
Sprang from our fallen head:  
Corruption flows through all our veins,  
Our moral beauty's gone;  
The gold is fled, the dross remains;  
O sin! what hast thou done."

The sacred word of truth informs us, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." A fallen, ignorant, corrupt, selfish, unhappy creature like himself; for, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."—John iii. 6. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that



are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."—Rom. viii. 5—8. "In Adam all die."—1 Cor. xv. 22. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation."—Rom. v. 18. Is there any beauty in corruption, carnality, enmity, condemnation, death? if there is, then there is moral beauty in man, in his fallen state. We wonder that any intelligent being can, with the Bible in his hand, with the history of man before his eyes, and with the consciousness of his own acts, be so void of common sense, as to deny the innate depravity, and complete moral deformity of the whole of the human race. For our own part, we shudder with horror when we hear any man denying the scriptural account of man's depravity, attempting to overturn the proofs of that depravity, derived from the universal wickedness of our race, and excusing his own flagrant violations of the law of God, which is holy, just, and good. "If we say we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

To recover us from our fall, and restore us to the image of God, is the grand design of redemption. For this Christ became incarnate—lived, suffered, died, rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession: for this the Holy Spirit was sent into the world, and is continued among us: for this the Bible was written, and has been preserved through the lapse of ages: for this the church has been formed, and the ministry of reconciliation given and perpetuated. All who are Christ's have, in some degree, the beauty of the Lord God upon them. They are created anew in Christ Jesus, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."—Col. iii. 10. "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."—Ephes. iv. 23, 24. Christ's people are said to be "Willing in the day of his power, in the beauties of holiness." To behold the beauty of the Lord was the earnest desire of the Psalmist; and every true child of God desires to behold the beauty of the Lord, because it has a transforming influence upon the mind.

Knowledge, holiness, and benevolence, which are the

beauty of God, must be upon us, and appear in all we say and do, or we are not prepared to sustain a revival, and sinners will not be converted. Unless we are fully renewed in the Spirit of our minds, we are not prepared to sustain the labour, the self-denial, and the reproach which a revival of religion requires. If we have not the mind that was in Christ Jesus—if we are not made conformable to his death, we shall soon cry out what a weariness it is: shall soon give up intensely caring for souls, and zealously and continually labouring for their salvation. Besides, if we have not the beauty of the Lord our God upon us, sinners, when they perceive the ignorance, the selfishness, the impurity of our nominal, half-hearted Christianity, will be disgusted with us, and will, in all probability through us, blaspheme the name of our God and the doctrines we profess. The meekness of wisdom, the beauty of holiness, the lustre of benevolence attract the thoughts, subdue the wills, and enlist the affections of the ungodly. When the beauty of the Lord our God displays itself in our spirit, in our conversation, and in our actions, then sinners take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and are constrained to glorify our Father in heaven. The sweetness of disposition, the purity of speech, the benevolence of action, which those ever manifest who are clothed with the beauty of the Lord, cannot fail to secure the conversion of sinners. How much, how very much, do professors need the beauty of the Lord, to enable them to sustain a revival of God's work, and continually draw sinners to the contemplation of the beauties of religion, and to seek its possession. Depend upon it, we shall never have a great revival of religion until believers are clothed with the beauty of the Lord our God.

*Moses prays to God to establish the work of our hands, so that the revival of religion may be permanent.*

The work of a believer's hands, spoken of in scripture, is something done for God and for the good of his cause. What Moses here calls "the work of our hands," Paul calls "the work of the Lord."—1 Cor. xv. 58. When we instruct the ignorant, warn the profligate, persuade the wavering to become decided Christians, reclaim the wanderer, or whatever we do in God's cause, for Christ's sake, is called the work of our hands, and the work of the Lord; because the Lord is our master, and we are his servants. Without the labour, the zealous and continued labour of Christians, the church of God will not, cannot be revived, and sinners will not be

converted ; and we may labour till we die, but if God does not own and bless our endeavours, there will be no genuine, permanent revival of religion. Unless God establish our work, all our goodness will be as transient as the morning cloud and early dew, which speedily vanish. If he does not establish the work of our hands, all that we make sinners feel, and desire, and resolve, will be like a bubble on the water, which bursts at the slightest touch. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it ; except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows," unless God establish the work of your hands. David prays, "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us ;" and if he does not strengthen it, it will be sure to come to nought. Paul says, "We are labourers together with God. I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase. So neither is he that planted any thing, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase." We may, by additional means of grace and protracted labours, produce an excitement among the people of God, cause sinners to cry for mercy, and hope they are converted ; but if God does not establish the work in the hearts of his people, and in the hearts of sinners, there will be no genuine, permanent revival of religion. Moses felt this to be a matter of vast importance ; he had seen so much of fickleness and inconstancy among the Israelites, that he is more earnest about the good work being permanent than about any thing else. He repeats his prayer for the permanency of the work, "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." Let us do likewise. Let us pray for a revival of God's work : let us pray for a manifestation of God's glory to produce that revival : let us pray for the beauty of the Lord our God to be upon us, to enable us to sustain a revival ; but let us double our prayers for its permanency, and then souls will be converted. Nothing can prevent their conversion.

II. The means to be employed to gain a genuine revival, a permanent revival of religion.

*There must be faith on the part of the church, or a revival cannot be obtained.*

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Moses firmly believed that God was able and willing to revive his work. The language of this text can never be regarded as the language of unbelief and despair. If Moses had not

believed that God both could and would revive his work, manifest his glory, put his beauty upon the people, and establish the work of their hands upon them, he never would have prayed for these blessings. Moses was too wise, too holy, too sensitive of God's honour, to pray for any thing which he knew God could not or would not impart. There is not the slightest unbelief in this prayer. There is none of that ignorance and unbelief which comes of God, saying, "If it be thy will, give us a revival of religion." Those who thus pray for a revival of religion are either steeped in ignorance or unbelief, or both. There is no truth more clearly revealed in the Bible than the anxiety of God for the preminent holiness of his people and the universal conversion of the ungodly. Surely, then, nothing but ignorance and unbelief will ever cause a saint to pray to God for a revival of religion, in a suppositional way, when God has assured his church that he will revive his work if we seek it aright. The language of Moses, in the text, is the language of an intelligent, believing man, who staggers not at the promise through unbelief. Moses comes with humble boldness to the throne of grace, and cries, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

And certainly we have, in the present day, all the evidence that is required to induce us to believe that God is both able and willing to give us a genuine and permanent revival of religion. He can do what pleaseth him among the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth ; and none can stay his hand, nor say, what doest thou ? His language to his church is calculated to inspire her with confidence, and to induce her to labour, with all her might, for a revival of religion, for the salvation of souls.

"Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee ; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant ; and thou, Jerusalem, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring : And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's ; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name

of Israel."—Isa. xlv. 2—5. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together: I the Lord have created it."—Isa. xlv. 8. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes: For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."—Isa. liv. 2, 3. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off."—Isa. lv. 13. "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces (or wealth) of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows? A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time."—Isa. lx. 4, 5, 8, 22.

These predictions clearly foretel an abundant revival, and enlargement of the church of God; and are sufficient, of themselves, to produce and sustain faith in God for a blessed revival of his work. Ponder them seriously, understand them fully, believe them firmly, and then, with mighty faith, you will come to the throne of grace, and cry, with Moses. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants," &c.

Had we none of the above cited predictions, yet the promises of Christ contained in Matthew xviii 19, 20, and in Mark xi. 20—24, are sufficient to warrant us to believe in God for a revival of religion. There his words are, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou re-

moved, and be thou cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass ; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

On these gracious promises we take our stand ; and may boldly declare, that unwavering faith in God, associated with united prayer, will secure, infallibly secure, a genuine, extensive, and permanent revival of religion. All those mountains of difficulty which we see opposing the revival and spread of pure and undefiled religion, will FAITH IN GOD remove. Christ cannot do many mighty works among us, because of our unbelief. Too many professors of religion think a genuine, extensive permanent revival of religion altogether out of the question ; and, therefore, never believe and pray for it. Others, who desire and pray for a revival of religion, have too little faith to secure it. "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" "Fear not : only believe. All things are possible to him that believeth."

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone ;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, It shall be done."

Unless we have great faith in God, a great revival of religion in the church, and numerous conversions among the ungodly, will be impossible. Have faith *in* God, and the faith *of* God, and religion will be revived, and numbers will be converted.

*To secure a revival of religion, there must be prayer as well as faith.*

Moses not only believed, but he prayed fervently and importunately for the things he desired. "Let," says he, "thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." In this prayer there is sincerity, fervour, importunity. Moses was not a man that used unmeaning words ; nor was he the man to leave off praying before he obtained the blessings for which he prayed. If you read and study the prayers of Moses, you will find them characterised by great sincerity, great fervour, and great importunity. He felt the need of the blessings for which he prayed, therefore his whole soul was engaged, and

he held on praying for Israel till he gained what he asked. What a striking view does the following passage give us of the importunity of Moses in prayer :—

"Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek : to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek ; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed ; and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy ; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon ; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side ; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword."—Exodus. xvii. 8—13.

Nothing, you see, but sheer exhaustion, caused Moses to cease praying for Israel, on the memorable day when Joshua discomfited Amalek. And if we would have a genuine and permanent revival of religion, we must copy the example of Moses. If we would see the enemies of the Lord discomfited, and immortal souls rescued from the hand of the enemy, there must be sincere, effectual, unceasing prayer, offered by us, to the God of heaven, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw ;  
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw ;  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above.  
Restraining prayer, we cease to fight ;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright ;  
And satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.  
While Moses stood with arms spread wide,  
Success was found on Israel's side ;  
But when, through weariness, they fail'd,  
That moment Amalek prevail'd."

There is now much sincere prayer offered, by the people of God, for the revival of the church, and for the conversion of the world ; but there is great reason to fear, that their prayers are not characterized by that holy fervour of soul, and that unceasing importunity, which secure the blessings prayed for. We see but little of the agony of prayer which Christ manifested in the garden of Gethse.



mane; but little of that importunity which Jacob manifested at the brook Jabbok; when, after wrestling all night, he was desired to let his celestial visitant depart, he vehemently exclaimed, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." One reason why our prayers are destitute of this holy fervour, and unceasing importunity, is, because we do not see clearly, and feel powerfully, the absolute need of the revival of God's work, in order to secure the salvation of the souls of men. We probably see and feel the *desirableness* of a revival, but not its *absolute necessity*, and, therefore, our prayers are languid and soon end: consequently, no great spiritual influence is imparted to the church, and but few of the ungodly are convinced and converted. We must not only pray sincerely and fervently, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants," &c.; but we must keep praying and wrestling until God's work does appear, until his glory is seen, until his beauty is put upon us, and the work of our hands is established. Whenever and wherever God has abundantly revived his work, the people of God have perceived so clearly, and felt so powerfully, the absolute need of a revival of religion, that they could not rest until he "that dwelleth between the cherubims shone forth, and stirred up his strength, and came and saved them." And, depend upon it, we shall never have a genuine, extensive, permanent revival of God's work until we get into the same spirit of agonizing and persevering prayer.

When we thus depend entirely upon God for a revival of his work, and get into the spirit of prayer, we shall have a revival, and souls will be converted. Just as certain as the prayer of Moses succeeded in staying God from destroying Israel, shall we succeed. Just as certain as Jacob prevailed at the brook Jabbok, shall we prevail with God, when our faith and prayers are like unto his.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Can we ask any thing more agreeable to the will of the Father? can any thing glorify God more, satisfy Christ more, delight the Holy Spirit more, than the increased holiness of believers and the conversion of the ungodly? Nay, verily. In the illustrious piety of saints, and in the numerous conversions of sinners, the eternal Father God has special delight. Seek, then, a revival in the way now pointed out, and you have all the assurance you can need, or can reasonably wish

to have, that a genuine, extensive, permanent revival will take place. Consider,

III. The necessity for an immediate use of the means required.

We have already shown the necessity of a revival of God's work under the first head of this discourse ; what we wish now to impress upon your minds, is the *immediate* necessity of using the means required to obtain a revival.

*You must acknowledge that a revival is now needed.*

The church of God is more than half asleep. Numbers are at ease in Zion, settled on their lees, saying, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil. The piety of nearly all the saints is very deficient ; the majority of hearers in our congregations are either careless neglectors of salvation, or helters between two opinions. The devil's strongholds exist : on every hand his emissaries are vigilantly labouring to defend them. Do not these things demonstrate the immediate necessity for vigorous and continued effort, to quicken the church, to awaken the careless, to check the efforts and defeat the purposes of the wicked one ? Christians, have faith in God, but have it now ; cry mightily unto God, but cry now : for there is the utmost need.

*The necessity of using the means now is evident from the fact, that while you are neglecting to use them, the church is getting into a worse state, and evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse.*

While the man whose house is on fire is hesitating whether he will give the alarm, and call his neighbours to his assistance, the flames are increasing in violence, and will speedily burn up all ; and while you are hesitating—delaying to exercise faith in God, restraining prayer before God, coldly calculating whether any good can be done or not, the church is getting into a worse state : the love of many waxes cold, backslidings become more frequent, and the church is becoming a by word and reproach in the mouths of the ungodly. The uncircumcised Philistines have but too much reason to rejoice. While you are hesitating, sinners also are becoming more hardened in sin, getting farther and farther from God, and nearer and nearer to hell-fire. Seek, then, a revival ; but do it at once, lest it be too late.

*The necessity for using these means now is still further evident, from the fact, that while you are waiting for more striking means than simple faith and humble prayer, sinners are perishing: dying and dropping into quenchless flames.*

We hear of sinners dying every week; and, notwithstanding our apathy, the fact does at times strike the mind, that they are gone down to the pit, "Where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched." The fact does strike us at times, that their eternal ruin might have been prevented had we have done our duty; and the feelings produced in our hearts by this consideration are very painful. And we begin to wish that somebody would move for a protracted-meeting, or some extraordinary means, so that souls might be saved; and many pacify their consciences by saying they are willing to labour for the revival of religion and the salvation of souls, if the church would only begin a protracted-meeting. Protracted-meetings are well enough in their place; but shall we criminally neglect the use of the ordinary means of grace: neglect to exercise faith, and use the right kind of prayer to save them, because we have not something uncommon and striking to employ in their salvation. That which revives the church, that which saves souls from hell, however old, however common, is just as good as that which is new and striking. For our part, we are in favour of anything, not sinful, which will revive the church, stop sinners in their mad career, and pluck them as brands from the burning. But for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for the Holy Spirit's sake, for the church's sake, and for precious souls' sake, do not neglect the means which you have within your reach, and which, if faithfully used, can and will save men, because there is no protracted-meeting held, and because you have nothing new and striking to employ.

Christian brethren, let us drop all our petty differences and useless controversies, and unite heart and hand to revive the Church of God, and save immortal souls from death. It is no time to be quarrelling among ourselves when our brethren and sisters in Christ are losing their first love, becoming lukewarm, yea, becoming dead. It is high time that we begin to strengthen the things which remain—which are ready to die: for our works have not been found perfect before God. It is no time for controversy when sinners are perishing on every hand; but it is high time that we put on bowels of mercies, and went forth in the strength of the

Lord, to turn their feet from the broad way that leads to death; into the narrow way that leads to life.

Let us strive to increase each others faith in God; let us unite together in prayer to God for a revival of his work; let the prayers, not of a few, but of all the saints, be, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it;" and the church will revive, and sinners will be converted. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." On our conduct, as Christians, depends the salvation of the souls of men; and if thy are lost through our neglect, the blood of their souls will be found upon us at the last day.

## DISCOURSE V.

PRECIOUS SEED MUST BE SOWN WITH TEARS, OR MANY SOULS  
WILL NOT BE SAVED

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."—PSALM CXXVI. 4, 5.

While the Spirit of grace and supplication is absolutely necessary to save the souls of men—while prayer and faith in God are essentially requisite, on the part of Christians, to secure the Spirit in his convincing, converting, and sanctifying operations, rest assured that a faithful presentation of the truth of God, to the mind of the sinner, is equally needed, before he can be saved. Truth, the truth as it is in Jesus, is the instrument of the sinner's conversion. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Unless the truth is understood, believed, and obeyed, the operations of the Spirit, and the prayer and faith of God's children, neither will, nor can, "convert the sinner from the error of his ways." We would urge you, therefore, Christian brethren, to obey the injunction of the wise man, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper: either this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good."

In the two preceding discourses we have shown that the Spirit of grace and supplications is needed to arrest the sinner's attention, to fix his thoughts on the Saviour's death, and cause him to mourn with that godly sorrow for sin, which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of: that faith and prayer, on behalf of Christians, are required to secure a revival and extension of the work of God, so that men may be saved; and fearing lest any should think that no more is required, on the part of believers, to secure the salvation of sinners, it is needful now to show that the truth must be brought to bear on the minds of the ungodly, or they will live and die in sin, and eternally perish. There are many interesting topics connected with the text that might be noticed, but as they are

not of paramount importance, we shall waive them, and endeavour to fix your attention on the following important points:

- I. The seed to be sown.
- II. Sowing the seed is the duty of all Christians.
- III. The emotions of mind necessary to sow it aright.
- IV. The glorious harvest that will assuredly follow the right sowing of this seed.

- I. The seed to be sown.

*The seed to be sown is the Word of God.* The truth contained in the Bible is the precious seed which brings forth fruit unto eternal life. We are not at liberty to sow what seed we please in the hearts of sinners; but we must sow in their hearts the unadulterated truths of God's word. In the eighth chapter of Luke's gospel, we have an interesting parable respecting the sower, the seed, the places where it was sown, the failure of the crop in some places, with the causes of that failure; and the rich harvest which it yielded in other places, and the causes thereof. That parable is worthy the attentive perusal and deep consideration of every Christian. In that interesting parable Jesus declares, "The seed is the word of God." "The seed to be sown is such seed as this: 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'" "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

This is the kind of seed that must be first sown in the sinner's heart. Farmers always raise first a wasting crop from ground that is very foul, in order to clean it, and prepare it for the more precious grains; and so must the sinner's heart be cleared of the rubbish of his fancied goodness, self-righteousness, pride, and impenitence, before the blessed fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and temperance can ever be raised in his heart, and abound in his life. When this glori-

ous work of preparation is effected, then the seed to be sown is such as, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from all sin." "For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

This is a fair specimen of the seed to be sown in a broken, contrite heart, and if rightly sown, will bring forth fruit to the glory of God, in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundred-fold; and this kind of seed we are only warranted in sowing in the sinner's heart *when he is truly humble and contrite.*

*Mark the quality of this seed.* It is styled in the text "Precious seed." Christ terms it "Good seed." Peter calls it "Incorruptible seed." The quality of this seed is proved to be good by the excellect fruit which it bears. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." "A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit," neither can vile seed produce precious fruit. *The word of God produces genuine contrition for sin, and hatred of every thing evil.* Paul's letter to the Corinthians produced in them the most blessed consequences: "For behold this self same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" And whenever the proper seed is sown in the hearts of sinners, it will lead to confession, contrition, and conversion.

*This seed produces faith in Christ Jesus, love to God, love to all the saints, and an intense desire for the salvation of all men.*

"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints; For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard, and



know the grace of God in truth."—Col. i. 3—6. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. . . . For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God."—1 Thess. i. 3—9. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe."—1 Thess. ii. 13. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. . . . Being made free from sin and become servants of God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—Rom. vi. 17, 22. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently: Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—1 Peter i. 22, 23.

These citations abundantly prove that the word of God, understood, believed, and obeyed, produces faith, love, purity, and zeal. It must be precious seed, indeed, which brings forth such excellent fruit.

*This seed will yield eternal glory.* Those who receive this seed into their hearts, in the love of it, and who properly watch over it, will reap from it everlasting life. On this point the following passages are explicit and satisfactory:—

"Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls."—James i. 21. "But

*continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them ; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*"—2 Timothy iii. 14. 15.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man *keep my saying*, he shall never see death."—John viii. 51. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth on him*, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day."—John vi. 40.

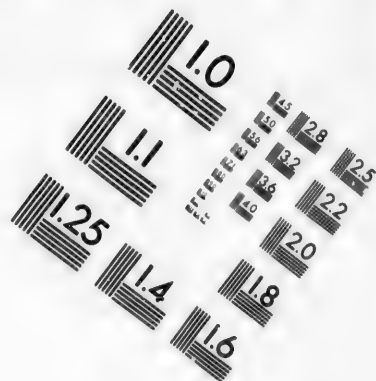
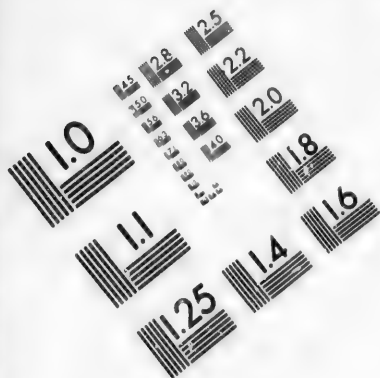
"Verily, verily, I say unto you, *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me*, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life."—John v. 24.

How clearly do these citations point out what is requisite to secure the great gift of God, which is eternal life. The word of God must be received with meekness, the Saviour whom it reveals must be believed in, his sayings must be kept, his doctrines must be continued in, and then the soul will be saved. The man who thus receives : thus cherishes and preserves this precious seed, has already passed from death to life. He has eternal life in the promise ; he will, at the death of the body, have it in the possession and the enjoyment ; and at the resurrection, on the last day, Christ will raise his sleeping dust, and his corruptible body shall put on incorruption, and his mortal frame shall put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass, in his experience, the saying which is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Well may the word of God be termed precious seed, seeing that it yields every faithful soul glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. Let us prize the word of God, and act in all things as that word requires, and we shall both save ourselves and those who receive aright the word of God from our lips. Consider,

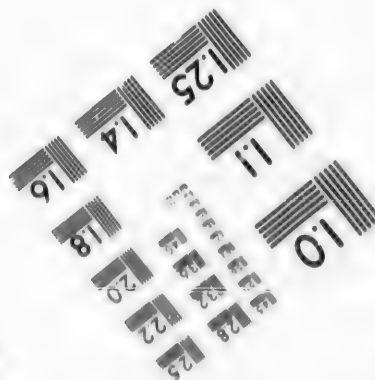
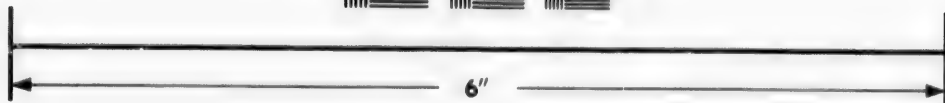
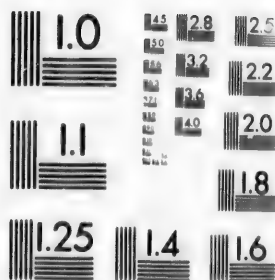
II. That the sowing of this precious seed is the duty of all Christians.

We have no hesitation in affirming that it is the duty of all Christians to sow this seed, as they have ability and opportunity, in the hearts of their fellow-men. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Christians are commanded by Christ to "Go home and tell their friends what great things God has done for them ;" to "Go



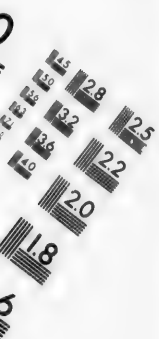


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into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." These commands are addressed to no particular class in the church, but are addressed to all the people of Christ indiscriminately.

*It is the duty of the minister of the gospel to sow this seed.* "Preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. . . . Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."—2 Tim. iv. 2, 5.

*It is the duty of every officer in the church to sow this seed.* "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine."—1 Tim. v. 17. "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre ; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. . . . For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. iii. 8, 9, 13. Elders and deacons who filled those offices in the primitive Church, which are now filled in Methodist churches by local preachers, leaders, and stewards, were, next to the ministers, the servants of the Lord, in the church ; and Paul says, "The servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient ; In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance unto the acknowledgement of the truth ; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."—2 Tim. ii. 24—26.

*It is the duty of all Christian parents to sow this seed.* "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Ephes. vi. 4. Timothy's mother and grandmother are highly commended for their piety, and for imparting scriptural knowledge to him. The law of God required all Jewish parents to teach their children the great truths of God's law. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart ; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."—Deut. vi. 6, 7. The great reasons why God required children to be taught his statutes, are thus stated by the royal Psalm-

ist, "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments : And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation ; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God."—Psalm lxxviii. 7, 8.

*It is the duty of the Sabbath school teacher to sow this seed.* He voluntarily enters the Sabbath school with the avowed intention of sowing the good seed of the kingdom in the hearts of the children who compose his class ; and he neither can nor will perform his duty to God and the children unless he is animated by the spirit and copies the example of the Psalmist, when he said, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the Lord."—Psalm xxxiv.

*It is the duty of all the members of the church of Christ to sow this seed.* Moses says, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that he would put his Spirit upon them." This wish is fulfilled under the gospel dispensation. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams : And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit : and they shall prophesy."—Acts ii. 16, 17, 18.

To prophesy, is to speak unto men, to exhortation, to edification, and to comfort. All Christians may do this, without entering the pulpit and publicly preaching the word ; and we despair of the universal spread of truth, righteousness, love, and joy in the earth, until all the servants and handmaidens of the Lord do prophesy daily in the private walks of life. If it is only possible to sow the seed in the pulpit, then there is no need for God to pour out his Spirit on all his servants and handmaidens, for only a few of his servants are called publicly to minister in word and doctrine. The preaching of the word in the pulpit is, for the masses of mankind, the best method of sowing the seed in the hearts of sinners ; but the labours of the pulpit will not be sufficient if the children of God do not carry on the same blessed work in the common walks of life ; for numbers of sinners will not come to hear the gospel preached ; others, who do sit under the word, are careless hearers ; and besides, a minister cannot know, by any possibility,



the precise state of mind of each of his hearers, and therefore cannot sow the very seed that is required. Private Christians, who have their hearts full of love, and their eyes and ears open, may cast into the hearts of sinners the seed that is required; and they may sow it at those particular seasons when it is most likely to vegetate and bear fruit. Just think of a few passages which require all Christians to be attentive to their duty:

"They that understand *among the people shall instruct many*."—Dan. xi. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also."—Zech. viii. 20, 21. "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."—Isa. ii. 5. "The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things which ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. . . . And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. . . . And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."—John iv. 28, 29, 30, 39, 41, 42.

And cannot any man, or any woman, act as did this female. Numbers of the Samaritans, you see, were saved through her agency. Paul intimates clearly, when writing to the churches of Phillippi and Corinth, that it is the duty of all Christians to sow the precious seed, both in private life and in the less public means, in the church. Addressing the Phillippians, he says:—

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life."—Chap. ii. 14, 15, 16.

And to the Corinthians:—

"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man

understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit i.e. speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues."  
—1 Cor. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 5.

To shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, and speaking to men to instruction, exhortation, and comfort, is of far greater importance than speaking with tongues; and it is the duty, the honour, and privilege of all the saints to let the light of their wisdom and piety so shine that others may be led by them to glorify their Father in heaven. It is the duty of all Christians to sow this seed, because God has made all believers stewards of the mysteries of the kingdom—stewards of the manifold grace of God; and they cannot discharge their duty aright without personally spreading the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is the duty of all Christians to sow this seed: for all believers are priests to God; and it is the duty of the priest to communicate instruction, and to have compassion on the ignorant, and on those that are out of the way. Peter says, of all Christians, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—1 Peter ii. 9. It is the duty of all to sow this seed, because God will reward the faithful sower among the people, as well as the faithful sower in the ministry. He that winneth souls is wise, whether he be a clergyman or a layman. Let him know (preacher or private member) that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. They that be wise (or teachers, whether male or female) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. Whoever will carefully study the word of God will be shut up to the conviction that it is the imperative duty of every child of God to sow the seed of eternal truth.

*It is still farther the duty of all the children of God to sow this seed in all places, and under all circumstances. He that goeth forth weeping bearing precious seed, or, as it reads in the margin, bearing his seed-basket. Wherever the believer goes he should have his seed-basket with him: with tenderness, with faith, and with prayer, he should be*

instant in season and out of season, in scattering the precious seed of divine truth. We must not be particular about the place in which we sow this seed. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."—Isa. xxxii. 20. Christ sowed this seed wherever he went: in the synagogue, in the market-place, on the mountain, by the wayside, in the field, in the ship, in the private house, in social parties, or wherever he was: his meat was to do the will of him that sent him by imparting instruction to immortal souls wherever he met with them. We should do likewise; and then we should, like the sun in his course, carry light, life, and joy wherever we go; but, alas! too many who profess the Christian name never think of uttering a word of gospel truth, save among the people of God. If this plan is not altered, how are the ungodly to be convinced and converted? If sinners were met by the truth of God wherever and whenever they meet with a professed child of God, there would soon come a change over their minds; and sinners would be seen flying to Christ as a cloud, or as doves to their windows; but while private Christians will not carry their seed-baskets, and scatter the seed of the kingdom in all places, there cannot be an abundant ingathering of precious souls to Christ. This seed must be sown under all circumstances. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."—Eccles. xi. 4.

*We must not stop sowing this seed through fear of persecution.* If the first sowers of this seed had been deterred from sowing it through persecution, then the knowledge of the Lord Jesus would never have been diffused, and sinners never could have been saved. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."—Acts iv. 1—4. In the remainder of that chapter the manner in which the apostles were treated, and the manner in which they acted, show the bitter animosity of sinners to the truth, and the gracious help which God affords his faithful husbandmen when persecuted for sowing the seed of divine truth. The Waldenses, the Reformers, the Puritans, the first Methodists, were all persecuted for sowing the seed of God's word; but

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God supported them ; and though they sowed in tears, wrung from their hearts and eyes by bitter persecutions, yet they reaped in joy. And if we sow beside all waters, and under all circumstances, we shall be more or less persecuted. Many are now afraid of sowing this seed through fear of persecution. Let such listen to the word of God :—

“Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law ; fear ye not the reproaches of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool : but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation. I, even I, am he that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be as grass ; And forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth ; and hast feared every day continually the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy ? and where is the fury of the oppressor ? The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he may not die in the pit, and that his bread should fail. But I am the Lord thy God, that that divideth the sea, whose waves roared : The Lord of hosts is his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.”—Isa. li. 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16.

In our day we have nothing to fear but the reproaches and the revilings of men, and surely these ought not to stop us from sowing the seed, when chains, prisons, scourging, blocks, faggots, crosses, and gibbets, yea, death in all its forms could not prevent the confessors and the martyrs in past ages from sowing the seed. None dare lay violent hands on us for sowing the precious seed ; and if God protect, supports, and comforts us under the reproaches and the revilings of men ; and if, through sowing the seed, the captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, in defiance of all the reproaches and revilings of scoffers, we may persevere and faithfully sow the seed without fearing persecution. Christians, sow your seed without fearing man, who can only kill the body. Do your duty in the fear of God, who hath power to cast both body and soul into hell-fire.

*"We must not stop sowing this seed through bodily fatigue, hunger, or thirst, when we have an opportunity of doing good."* There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him."—John iii. 1, 2.

Mark, though it was night, the time of repose,—though, in all probability, the Saviour had been incessantly engaged in teaching the people, and in working miracles, throughout the day,—though his body needed rest; yet he does not send Nicodemus away, but he spends a considerable portion of that night in explaining to him the nature and necessity of the new birth: the mysterious operations of the Spirit: the necessity of his being lifted up as the serpent was lifted up by Moses; and the love and the design of God in sending his Son into our world. Here is an example worthy the imitation of every follower of Christ.

"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph: Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour. Then cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.)"—John iv. 5, 8. In the absence of his disciples he taught this woman the value and necessity of the Spirit's influences: revealed to her his intimate knowledge of her character and condition: explained to her the nature of God, and the nature of that worship which is acceptable to Jehovah: manifested himself to her as the Saviour of the world: sowed the seed of eternal life in her heart; and filled her with that zeal which led her at once to go and impart the knowledge of Jesus to her fellow-citizens.

"In the mean while, his disciples prayed him, saying; Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Then fore said his disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."—John iv. 31—35.

The Samaritans in crowds were coming to the Saviour,

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and he evidently partook not of temporal food, until he had fed their souls with the bread of life. How astonishing is the character of the Saviour. What an entire forgetfulness of himself, in his anxiety to do the will of God. No fatigue, no weariness, no hunger, no thirst, could, or did prevent him from sowing the precious seed. And all who have been baptized with the Spirit of Jesus copy his example. Look at the apostles, in their travels to sow the precious seed: they were not only in journeyings and perils often; but they were "In weariness, and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Yet none of these things moved them to leave their work, or to repine at their lot. Our souls, my brethren, ought to be covered with shame, when we think how often we have allowed the slightest wants of the body to prevent us from sowing the precious seed. O may the Spirit of Christ be poured upon us in that measure; and the love of Christ be felt in us to that degree, that, in future, we may not even count our lives dear unto us, if we can be useful in sowing the precious seed of eternal life in the hearts of perishing men,

Consider,

III. The emotions of mind necessary to enable us to sow this seed aright.

"They that sow *in tears*. He that goeth forth and *weepeth*." In Europe farmers often steep their grain in salt or lime-water, to preserve it from smut, from insects, and to accelerate its growth; and unless the word we sow is steeped in faith and prayer, and sown with tears, it will not be very fruitful.

*Deep emotion on our part is essentially necessary to cause sinners to believe the truth, and to make them feel the power of the word.*

Go into a neighbour's house, in a trifling manner, and in a laughing, careless tone say, "Your child is killed:" would he believe you? No. He would say, "You are joking;" but go in with breathless haste, and with tears in your eyes, exclaim—"Your child has just been run over by a carriage, and I fear it is killed," he would then believe you, and hasten directly to the spot. And when you sow this seed in a frivolous manner, it is sure to be rejected; but when you feel its truth yourselves, and when sinners, by your solemn earnestness of manner, by your very looks, perceive the deep emotions of your heart; when they behold the quivering lip, the



tearful eye, the heaving breast, they see you are in earnest, and believe what you say : then they begin to feel that there is a reality in religion, and that it is high time to begin to seek the Lord with their whole hearts. Pondering seriously the causes of your deep emotion, they are led to think of their own character and condition. They begin to feel that their guilt, misery, and danger must be great, or you would not be so deeply concerned for them ; and at length they are forced to cry, " O wretched men that we are ! who shall deliver us from the body of this death ?"—Rom. vii. 24. When the Jews heard the death and resurrection of Christ earnestly and feelingly set forth by Peter on the day of Pentecost, it is said, " Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ?"—Acts ii. 37. Deep and tender emotion on the part of those who sow this precious seed, will do more toward convincing and saving sinners than all the eloquence of words which men can possibly employ. All that is wanted in sowing this seed, is a tender, compassionate heart, that will pray to God and weep over the sinner until his hard heart is melted into tenderness, and prepared to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save the soul. Sincere and deep emotion, on your part, sinners cannot withstand. They will ward off, by some conductor, the lightning of your arguments : they will stand, unmoved, the shock of the thunder of your denunciations ; but they cannot ward off, nor yet withstand, the gushings of your compassion, when you reprove, rebuke, and exhort them with all long-suffering, gentleness, and tenderness. Then their hearts melt, their wills yield, their prayers and tears mingle with yours ; and you will have the unspeakable delight of seeing them turn from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God.

*There are many considerations, which, if duly weighed, will infallibly excite the right and the necessary emotions in your hearts.* To have proper emotions in the heart, there must be much thought on those subjects which are calculated to excite the feelings desired. We do not feel, because we do not consider. Let any Christian seriously ponder the dishonour which sinners cast upon God by their hatred of his person and government : by their flagrant violation of his laws ; and by their hard speeches which ungodly sinners speak against him ; and if he has one single spark of love to God, he must feel deeply grieved that the great Creator, the



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bountiful preserver, and merciful redeemer of our race, should be so unjustly and ungratefully treated by the sons and daughters of men. Let any Christian duly weigh the cruelty manifested by sinners toward the Saviour, in trampling him underfoot, in counting his blood a common thing, in neglecting the great salvation purchased by his blood, and in their continually piercing him afresh by their sins ; and if he has any consolation in Christ, he must at times weep bitterly to think, that notwithstanding the amazing love, the inconceivable sufferings, and the accursed death of Christ, to save these sinners from the curse of God, from the power of Satan, and from the damnation of hell : yet the Saviour's love, and sufferings, and death, are nothing in their estimation ; and that they cruelly refuse him the love of their hearts, the homage of their lips, and the service of their lives. Let any Christian rightly consider the mighty insult which sinners offer to the Holy Spirit of God by despising his love, quenching his operations, and driving him from their hearts, when His object is only to enlighten, to convert, to sanctify, and to save them ; and if he has any fellowship with the Spirit, he must be pained to the quick when he remembers how the blessed Spirit is insulted and grieved by the infamous conduct of sinners toward him. Let any Christian also frequently bring to his recollection the present miserable condition of the sinner, and the eternal weight of woe which must be his portion in a future state : let him remember the darkness, the guilt, the pollution, the bondage, the misery, of the sinner's present state : let him weigh well what is meant by endless banishment from God—by the fire, the brimstone, the blackness, the chains of the bottomless pit : by companionship with devils, and with all the fearful, unbelieving, and abominable men who inhabit the regions of despair : by the wrath of God and the Lamb, which is in hell, poured out without mixture ; and, above all, let him ponder again and again the fearful declaration, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever ; and they have no rest, day nor night ;" and if he has the least degree of compassion in his nature, the merest trifle of genuine love to man, he will at times weep bitterly over his fellow-sinners, whom he wishes to turn from the error of their way. These considerations must be weighed carefully and frequently to produce the right emotions of mind, to enable us to sow properly the precious seed. Considerations like these caused rivers of tears to run down David's cheeks : caused Jeremiah to wish that

his head were waters, and his eyes fountains of tears, that he might weep day and night : caused Paul to utter the following touching passages :—

“Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”—Phil. iii. 18, 19. “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsman after the flesh.”—Rom. ix. 1, 2, 3.

Considerations like these so powerfully operated upon the mind of the holy and compassionate Saviour, that,—

“When he was come near, he beheld the city (Jerusalem) and wept over it, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thy eyes.”—Luke xix. 41, 42.

And these considerations would make any Christian weep : would cause him to sow the precious seed in tears, and go forth weeping bearing his seed-basket ; but, alas ! these considerations are entirely overlooked by many professing godliness ; and by all of us they are not thought of frequently enough to produce constantly the requisite emotion to enable us to sow the precious seed. Not feeling sufficiently, when sowing this seed, is one great reason why so few are converted to God. By serious and repeated thought on the points now brought before you, you may get more feeling, and then you will both sow in tears and reap in joy. Consider,

IV. The glorious and joyous harvest that will assuredly follow the right sowing of this precious seed.

*When the word of God is sown with deep, pious emotion, a glorious harvest will follow.* This truth is distinctly stated in the text. They that sow in tears *shall* reap. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, *shall doubtless* come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Here, you perceive, it is positively declared that every weeping sower shall reap : that there is no doubt whatever, but he will come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. It is just as certain, yea, more so, that we shall see immortal souls converted to God, than it is that the farmer

will reap in harvest, when in the fall or the spring of the year he properly sows his seed. The eternal God of truth has stated this in language which cannot be misunderstood :

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater ; So shall the word be that goeth forth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa. lv. 10, 11. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—1 Cor. xv. 58.

The farmer is not absolutely certain of a crop ; but the Christian husbandman is absolutely certain that, if he sows aright, some will be converted. We have not only the above cited passages to assure us of the truth of this statement, but the history of all the evangelical sections of the church of Christ now in existence demonstrates the position now assumed. Whenever Christians have taken the word of God, and steeped it in prayer, and sown it in tears, they have been successful in the conversion of souls. We will say nothing about the success of men devoted to the work of the ministry ; but read the lives of such persons as Mrs. Fletcher, Hester Ann Rogers, William Carvosso, and Harlan Page, and you will find abundant proofs of the truth of this statement. If all have not received the engrafted word with meekness, to whom it has been presented in a proper manner, yet the generality have received it as the word of God, and it has proved to them the word of spiritual and eternal life. In reading over the lives of such persons as those above mentioned, we are forcibly struck with the fact, that very few of those in whose hearts they sowed the seed remained long in an unconverted state. And, in most cases, where a joyful harvest does not follow the sowing of the seed of the kingdom, the true cause lies in the improper manner of presenting the truth to the mind of the sinner. There are exceptions to every rule ; and while man is a free agent, all will not probably be converted to whom truth is presented aright ; but, generally speaking, where the truth is sown in tears, the blessed harvest of conversion will follow.

The very reason why so many Christians do not experience, in their labours, the truth of the declarations in the text, is because they overlook the guarantee of success which

this text so plainly gives. They do not comply with the terms on which the promise is based. They either do not sow enough of the seed, or else they do not sow it with emotion enough to produce a softening influence on the heart of the sinner, to prepare him to receive it with contrition and faith. They sow occasionally, but they do not carry their seed-basket with them, and throw the seed into the sinner's heart until it does produce fruit. They sow, but they do not sow with tears, and, therefore, sinners treat what they say with indifference. Still the text is true, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Sometimes the seed will spring up immediately. This was the case after our Saviour's sowing the precious seed at the well of Jacob, in one of the suburbs of the city of Sychar, in Samaria. In the space of a few hours, or perhaps only a few minutes, the fields were white already to harvest. Many at the very first believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. And when the Saviour had abode there two days, "many more believed because of his own word." In later times many have witnessed the rapid conversion of men after the truth was rightly presented to their minds. But sometimes the harvest is deferred: the seed lies buried, but it does not rot. Instances have been known where scores of years have passed away before the seed sown has brought forth fruit.

"Mr. Flavel, on one occasion, preached from the following passage: 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.' The discourse was unusually solemn, particularly the explanation of the words Anathema Maranatha—'cursed with a curse, cursed of God with a bitter and grievous curse.' At the conclusion of the service, when Mr. Flavel arose to pronounce the benediction, he paused, and said, 'How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it, who loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ, is Anathema Maranatha?' The solemnity of this address affected the audience; and one gentleman, a person of rank, was so overcome by his feelings, that he fell senseless on the floor. In the congregation was a lad named Luke Short, then about fifteen years old, and a native of Dartmouth. Soon after he went to America, where he passed the rest of his life, first at Marblehead, and afterward at Middleborough, Massachusetts. Mr. Short's life was length-

ened much beyond the usual time. When an hundred years old, he had sufficient strength to work on his farm, and his mental faculties were very little impaired. Hitherto he had lived in carelessness and sin; he was now 'a sinner an hundred years old,' and apparently ready to 'die accursed.' But one day, as he sat in the field, he buised himself reflecting on his past life. Recurring to the events of his youth, his memory fixed upon Mr. Flavel's discourse above alluded to, a considerable part of which he was able to recollect. The affectionate earnestness of the preacher's manner, the important truths he delivered, and the effects produced on the congregation, were brought fresh to his mind. The blessing of God accompanied his meditations; he felt that he had not loved the Lord Jesus Christ; he feared the dreadful 'Anathema;' conviction was followed by repentance, and, at length, this aged sinner obtained peace through the blood of atonement, and was 'found in the way of righteousness.' He joined the Congregational church in Middleborough, and to the day of his death, which took place in his one hundred and sixteenth year, gave pleasing evidences of piety.

"On reading the foregoing, the author was forcibly reminded of the words of the divine Watts:

" ' Though seed lie buried long in dust,  
It can't deceive our hope;  
The precious grain can ne'er be lost,  
For grace ensures the crop.' "

—*Sabbath-day Miscellany, page 245.*

This was a remarkable case, but many years have elapsed, in other cases, before the seed sown in tears has produced fruit. We should sow in faith, and not be discouraged. "Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient."—James v. 7, 8. And if the husbandman has a failure in his crops one year, he does not sit down in despair, but he sows again the next, yea, sometimes in the same year, and patiently waits the result. Go ye and do likewise. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall be both alike good." Your duty is to sow the seed in tears, and God tells you that you shall reap in joy. You may not, in all cases, see the blessed result of your labours in this world, for it may not even spring up while you live.

An excellent friend of mine, of Dudley, England, Mr. W. Male, had a pious mother, who sowed the seed with tears in his youthful mind, but he was not converted till after his mother's death. While following her to the grave, the remembrance of her instructions, and prayers, and tears, fastened conviction on his mind, and led him to give his heart to God; and with deep feeling he spoke of it in one of his sermons, (for he was a local preacher,) and exhorted pious parents to keep sowing the seed in their childrens' minds, and to be instant in prayer for their conversion; and God would, in all probability, if not while they lived, yet when they were dead and gone, answer their prayers, and bless their efforts in the conversion of their children.

"And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon you bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." The seed you sow may not be lost, though you have not the pleasure of seeing its fruit, others may reap the advantages of your sowing, and lead to God, and to the church, and to heaven, those in whose minds you have sown the truth of God; but know this, for your encouragement to sow, "That both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together."

*The gathering of those precious souls to Christ, for whose conversion we have prayed, and wept, and laboured, will afford us unspeakable joy. We sow in tears, but we reap in joy. When souls have been set at liberty from sin, through our agency, what pure and ecstatic joy we have felt in singing,*

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him, all creatures, here below,  
Praise him above ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

We bring our sheaves into the church with joy and singing. Never did any husbandman rejoice half as much in bringing his sheaves home in harvest time, as we have seen Christians rejoice in the conversion of those for whose conversion they have laboured, wept, and prayed. Their joy has been far greater than the joy of harvest, and they have rejoiced more than earthly conquerors do when they divide the spoil. When the Lord, through the agency of his servants, redeems sinners from the hand of the enemy who is stronger than they, then believers experience what Jeremiah so graphically describes in the following passage:

"For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him



from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together for the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."—Jer. xxxi. 11—14.

This beautiful passage forcibly portrays the joyous feelings of the people of God when the seed sown in tears brings forth fruit. On one occasion, when we had witnessed, in the city of Montreal, the transition of a soul from darkness to light, from Satan to God, from death to life, a Christian said to us, "I would not have missed this scene for a bag full of sovereigns." And in our joy, in our pure and lofty songs of praise, on the return of a prodigal to his father's house, the inhabitants of heaven rejoice. We cannot hear their bursts of praise, and we cannot form an adequate conception of the greatness of their joy; but the Saviour assures us, "that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

It is time for me to close this discourse, and, in doing so, we observe that this subject teaches us, that one great reason why so few are converted, is because Christians do not labour for their conversion in the right way. How few ever attempt to sow the precious seed in the sinner's heart; fewer still sow it with tears; and yet these parties are often the first to complain because so little good is done—because so few souls are converted. Were such complainers faithful in sowing the seed, and compassionate enough to sow it with tears, their complaints would soon be silenced; for God would then own and bless their efforts in the conversion of souls.

This subject teaches, that one reason why so many Christians are strangers to pure and elevated joy, is because they do not labour in the way pointed out in the text for the salvation of souls. They do not travail in birth for sinners until Christ is formed in them; they do not weep at the throne of grace over the condition of the sinner; they do not go forth weeping to scatter the seed in his heart; therefore, they are, and must be, strangers to that exalted joy which is felt by the weeping sower, when precious souls are gathered to Christ, and deposited in the granary of the church.



This subject plainly points out the necessity of all Christians making their memories seed-baskets for the word of God: their tongues the scatterers of this seed, and their hearts and eyes fountains to water it while sowing it and when sown. In other words, success will not accompany our efforts to save souls, unless we obtain a greater knowledge of the scriptures; are more diligent in bringing scriptural truth to bear upon the minds of the ungodly; are more tender and compassionate in applying that truth, and more anxious about success.

Sinner, take heed how you hear, and how you receive the word of God. If you reject the word of truth you cannot be saved. All the influences of the Spirit; all the faith, the prayer, the labour, and the tears of God's children will be unavailing, if you reject the word of God. If you will not act as the word of God requires, then you must perish; for Christ will take vengeance, in flaming fire, upon them who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## DISCOURSE VI.

**THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO ACT WISELY, AND TO IMPROVE  
EVERY OPPORTUNITY FOR DOING GOOD, IF THEY  
WOULD SAVE SOULS.**

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”  
—Col. iv. 5.

The apostle in this and the preceding chapters of his epistle to the Colossians gives particular directions and exhortations to Christians in all their various relationships. Wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters, are severally addressed and directed, and exhorted to act as it becometh the gospel. He then beseeches them all to continue instant in prayer, to pray always for their ministers, and to act wisely and faithfully in all their intercourse with the ungodly. The success of the gospel, its extension among men, depends greatly upon the consistent conduct and zealous efforts of professors of religion. “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” This is a very important direction, and were it properly attended to, by all who profess the religion of Jesus Christ, sinners could not have any excuse for living in sin, arising from the improper conduct, and the indifference of professing Christians. Were this direction properly attended to, many who are now “without” would soon be “No more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

Let us consider,

I. The duty of Christians to act wisely in all their intercourse with unconverted men.

II. The duty of Christians to redeem every opportunity they have for benefiting the souls of the unsaved.

I. The duty of Christians to conduct themselves wisely in all their intercourse with unconverted men. “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.”

The phrase “Them that are without” undoubtedly means those who are destitute of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase occurs in 1 Cor. v. 12, “For what have I to do to judge them that are without.” Here it evidently means

those who were destitute of piety and were not within the pale of the church. In Thessalonians i. 12, it means the same, "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without." It has the same meaning in 1 Tim. iii. 7., "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." Some persons assert that this phrase means only to be without the pale of the church; but we assert that it means much more; for a man may be within the pale of any church of Christ, and yet be without godliness. Such persons are to be found of all religious persuasions, and in all sorts of Christian societies. Those who wish to see a judicious article on being within the pale of the Church, may find such a one in Dr. Adam Clarke's notes on this text. The phrase in the text means to be destitute of vital piety,—of saving religion. The best elucidation of this phrase is found in Ephesians ii. 12, "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." How dreadful is the state of such persons! They have no saving interest in Christ; for their sins are not covered with his blood, their souls are not under his protection and defence, therefore they are under the curse of the law, the dominion of sin, and the tyranny of Satan, who leads them captive at his will. They are strangers to all the privileges of the children of God, and aliens to all the blessings of the new covenant. They are destitute of the rational, scriptural, blessed hope of heaven, which believers enjoy. They are without God in the world: wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They are fatigued with grievous labours, but they have no God to support them; most miserable, but they have no God to comfort them; very poor, but they have no God to enrich them; blind, but they have no God to open the eyes of their understandings, and guide their feet into the way of peace; naked, but they have no God to clothe them with the garments of salvation and the robes of righteousness. Without God in this world, and eternal damnation before them in the next, their state is the most deplorable that can be imagined. Can their state be altered for the better? Yes, Christians, it may; for this was once your condition:—"But now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes far off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ," and it is your imperative duty, your unspeakable privilege to be agents in altering their condition, by bringing them to the

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blood of sprinkling, that "Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace"; may bestow upon them the same invaluable blessings.

*With "them that are without" Christians must hold intercourse.* You must come out from among the ungodly so far as it regards making companions of them, forming matrimonial alliances with them, having fellowship with their unfruitful works; and conforming to their spirit, maxims, and customs which are sinful. For the word of God declares that "A companion of fools shall be destroyed," requires that Christians "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," enjoins them to "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them", and commands them to "Be not conformed to this world; but to be transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." But though we must separate ourselves from the world in the manner above described, yet we must have to do with "them that are without." Christians must hold some intercourse with the ungodly, or go out of the world. But it is not the design of Christ that we should go out of the world; for in his prayer to his Father, recorded in the 17th of John we read, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." We must transact business, and act as citizens, with the ungodly; and, moreover, we must come in contact with them, and hold conversation with them, in order to do our duty to their immortal souls. The great thing we have to do is, to conduct ourselves as it becometh the gospel, in all our intercourse with "them that are without."

*It is your duty to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, in order to save their souls.* Wisdom is the power of judging rightly. Walking in wisdom, is reducing it to practice. The word wisdom, in this text, is supposed by some of the learned to come from a Hebrew root, which signifies to look round about on all hands, to watch. Robinson, in his Greek lexicon, informs us that the word wisdom signifies "skill in the affairs of life, practical wisdom, wise management, as shown in forming the best plans, and selecting the best means, including the idea of judgment and sound good sense. . . In respect to divine things, wisdom" signifies "knowledge, insight, deep understanding, represented everywhere as a divine gift, and including the idea of practical application," page 781. In

reference to the word used in the text, he says that it means discreet, judicious, practically wise. Christians, you have received wisdom from God. The prayer of Paul for the Ephesians has been answered in your experience, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Ephes. i. 17, 18, 19.: You are experimentally acquainted with the greatness of the believer's hope, with the unsearchable riches of Christ, with the exceeding greatness of Jehovah's power to save, it is therefore your bounden duty to look round upon your unconverted fellow men, and beholding their spiritual ignorance, poverty, misery, and danger, to walk among them so sensibly and so prudently, as either to induce them to become religious, or to leave them without any excuse whatever for continuing irreligious.

*To accomplish this end, you must act cautiously and prudently in their sight.* The caution and command of Christ to his first disciples should be engraven on the hearts of all his people, and should regulate the lives of all who name the name of Jesus, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"; Matt. x. 16. The wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove are required in all your intercourse with the ungodly, for you know that sinners would be heartily glad to see you perform anything that has the appearance of evil. They hate that which is good, and dislike even the appearance of it among men. When Aristides, the most upright of the Greeks, was about to be banished from Athens, a peasant, who could not write, and did not know him, came to him, and desired him to put the name of Aristides on his shell. "Has he done you any wrong," said Aristides, "that you are for condemning him in this manner." "No," said the peasant, "I do not so much as know him; but I am quite tired and angry with hearing every body call him *the just*." And, in like manner, your holy lives, my Christian brethren, excite the anger of ungodly men; they long to see you do some imprudent, or sinful thing, that would furnish them with matter to justify their own wickedness; it therefore especially behoves you to be cautious and prudent in all your dealings with them, so that they may

have no ground, from your conduct, to speak evil of the way of the Lord. You must especially exhibit before them the virtues of meekness, industry, and honesty. "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing"; 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12. "Owe no man any thing but to love one another"; Rom. xiii. 8. Turbulence, idleness, and dishonesty, manifested by any professing christian, give them that are without a fine opportunity to blaspheme the name of God, and to denounce the religion of Jesus Christ as a fable. The interests of the cause of Christ, and of the immortal souls of men, have suffered more from the incautious sayings and imprudent acts of professors, than from any other cause. Walk, then, in wisdom toward them that are without.

*To save the souls of them that are without, you must converse with them intelligently and judiciously upon the subject of religion.* You must be careful to avoid those topics of spiritual conversation which they, in their present state, cannot understand. To talk to them, until they are convinced of sin, of the deep things of God, would be to talk to them in an unknown tongue. The Apostle Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, shows the absolute necessity of Christians speaking even in the Church in an intelligent and judicious manner. He would rather that all prophesied, than speak with tongues, even among the believers. "For he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." When speaking of the influence of the injudicious use of the miraculous gifts which the Corinthians enjoyed, and of the blessed effect of speaking to men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort, he says:—"If therefore the whole church be come together in one place, and speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."—1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24, 25. If you, as Christians, talk to the unconverted about knowing your sins forgiven, enjoying purity of heart, holding communion with God, enjoying the indwelling presence of the blessed Comforter, will they not say ye are mad? But if you

converse with them about the shortness of human life, the uncertainty of death, and tell them that dying in their present sinful state they must go "Into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not and the fire is never quenched," they will understand you, and become concerned about their souls. If you talk to them about the goodness of God manifested in supplying their temporal wants, in giving his Son to die for them, in sending his Spirit to convince them, and in giving them the Bible to guide them to heaven: and ask them what return they have made to God for such goodness, they will understand you, and will, in all probability, be filled with horror at the thought of their great injustice, their black ingratitude, their daring impiety in forgetting God, in withholding from him their love, and in violating the laws of so good a being and so great a benefactor. Moreover, if you converse with them about the great privileges which they enjoy, such as living in a gospel land, enjoying a gospel ministry, being favoured with a religious education, with the word of God, and the means of grace; and show to them that it will be more tolerable for the heathen in the day of judgment than for them, if they are found without repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and holiness of heart and life, they will see their guilt and be forced to confess that if they perish they will perish justly. Or, if you show them the justice, purity, and goodness of God's law, and convince them that their views, dispositions, volitions, feelings, words, and actions are not in accordance either with its letter or spirit, and that unless they repent and accept of salvation by Christ, they are sure to be punished throughout eternity, they will understand you, feel the force of what you say, and your conversation may lead them to fly for refuge to the hope set before them. There are other topics which might be noticed as proper to introduce into your conversations with the ungodly, especially those connected with the birth, life, sufferings, and death of our blessed Lord, which are calculated to arrest the sinner in his downward course, and turn him to a pardoning God, that he may be saved; but what we have already stated is sufficient to convince any christian, that if he would save those that are without from sin and eternal death, he must employ *suitable truth* and advance it in an *intelligible judicious way*. If you converse with sinners aright, you will save their souls, and thus give to all an indisputable proof that you have walked in wisdom toward them; for "He that winneth souls is wise."



*To save the souls of "them that are without," you must be meek under all their reproaches, and kind to them notwithstanding all the injurious treatment you may receive from them. Sinners often reproach and persecute those who kindly and earnestly strive to save them from going down to the pit. The highest act of wisdom which we can manifest toward such, is to receive their reproaches with meekness, and bear their persecutions with fortitude. Such a course will tend, most assuredly, to convince them of the truth and benevolence of the religion which you profess, and will, in all probability, lead them at last to yield to your arguments, persuasions, entreaties, and cause them to embrace the religion of Christ as their portion. You are expressly required by the divine word thus to walk toward them that are without. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you"—Matt. vi. 44. James, when addressing Christians, says: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom. . . . But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace;"—James iii. 13, 17, 18. And Paul says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."—Rom. xii. 21. These passages clearly show that it is the imperative duty of the Christian to bear the reproaches of sinners with meekness and to be kind to them, notwithstanding their injurious treatment of him. Were all professors of religion thus to act, sinners would be struck with admiration at their patience, be melted into tenderness by their kindness, and be led to glorify our Father who is in heaven. The following anecdote of the Rev. John Smith shows that a course like this will be highly beneficial to the ungodly. It is recorded in his life, that "On one occasion he was seated at table directly opposite to a lady of family and respectability, who though in theory acquainted with the truth of the gospel, was destitute of its saving power. According to his custom, he embraced the opportunity of addressing her on the subject. She was greatly offended, and expressed her resentment in a manner scarcely suitable either to her sex or rank. When she was silent, Mr. Smith, with a look of inexpressible kindness, replied, "Madam, you may spit in my face if you*

please, but you cannot prevent me from loving your soul." The lady was deeply affected. A few years afterwards, she was taken ill, was attended by the Methodist preachers, and died a true penitent." Love to the souls of them that are without, will raise you superior to all the ill treatment you may receive from them, and cause you to persevere in your efforts to save them, however they may resent your benevolent concern for the welfare of their immortal souls. Thus walk in wisdom toward them that are without, and you will have the unspeakable joy of saving souls from death. No Christian performs his duty to his God, to the Church, or to the world, who does not act in the way now pointed out. God will not be glorified, the church will not be enlarged, sinners will not be saved, by that professing christian who does not act cautiously and prudently in the sight of sinners: who does not converse intelligently and judiciously with them on the subject of religion: who does not bear meekly their reproaches, and return good for their evil. Consider,

II. The duty of Christians to redeem every opportunity they have to benefit the souls of "them that are without."

"Redeeming the time." Many look upon this charge as an independent proposition, and consider it as relating to the redemption of time in general; as having no connexion whatever with walking in wisdom toward them that are without. We cannot regard it in this light. If it were an independent proposition, it would stand as those do in the fifth chapter of the first of Thessalonians: Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. These are independent propositions. But our text does not stand in such an isolated position; neither does the parallel text in Ephesians. In both places the words refer to our redeeming the time for the benefit of the ungodly.

Time, here, signifies time, season, opportunity, occasion. Redeeming, signifies to purchase out, to buy up, to redeem for one's use. Both this passage and the one in the fifth of Ephesians, signifies: rescuing and improving every opportunity to do good. \* The expression means just what Paul meant when he said to Timothy "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season"; i. e., Wherever you are, rescue and improve the opportunity you have for benefitting others by preaching the gospel. Redeeming the time for the benefit of those that are without, undoubtedly means to res-

\* Vide Robinson's Greek Lexicon, page 284.

cue and improve every opportunity we have of doing their souls good. Indeed, it is an act of great wisdom to take advantage of our intercourse with the ungodly, and speak a word for Christ, and for the good of their souls, and it is our imperative duty to do so; for the Holy Ghost commands us to attend to this very thing, and the souls of men greatly need our attention to this duty.

*We have opportunities for doing good to the souls of them that are without.* "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good to all men."—Gal. vi. 10. "Ye are the salt of the earth; . . . Ye are the light of the world."—Matt. v. 13, 14. These passages clearly show that we are bound to seek the welfare of sinners, and do them good as we have opportunity, and you must allow that in our intercourse with the ungodly, opportunities for doing them good, spiritual, saving good, do present themselves, which, if improved, may lead to their conversion. In the transaction of business, we meet, at times, with such opportunities. When on a journey, we are thrown into company with sinners, and have to pass hours, sometimes days, in their society, when we have little else to do but seek the spiritual welfare of those with whom we are, and must be, associated for a season. In the social circle, numerous opportunities present themselves, which might be improved to the spiritual and eternal good of those with whom we meet there. Were we to watch for opportunities to do good to the souls of men, scarcely a week would pass away without our doing something for God and the souls of men. Whenever such opportunities do occur, we should remember that the Lord requires us to embrace them, and that he will not hold us guiltless if we let them slip.

*These opportunities should be redeemed.* Neither fear nor shame should prevent us from doing our duty: for in its performance, on such occasions, the glory of God, the satisfaction of Christ, the honour of the Spirit, the salvation of souls, the welfare of religion, and our own peace of mind, are deeply concerned. Neither carelessness nor depression should prevent us from redeeming these opportunities. Many, when questioned how they improved their time with such a person or in such a company—Did you strive to do good? answer, "No, I did not find a favourable opportunity; besides, I did not feel like talking about religion." A poor excuse for the neglect of so great a duty. Those who thus neglect duty can talk most fluently, on such occasions, about the weather, the crops, the markets, the politics of the day: or, what is

worse, can indulge in foolish talking and jesting, yea even indulge, at times, in backbiting, slandering, and evil speaking, to the injury of others and the scandal of religion; but they cannot say a word for Christ, nor one word to save their friends from a burning hell. It is impossible to tell what good may be done by resolutely improving such opportunities, or the evil that may result from neglecting them. "A minister of one of the New Jersey Presbyteries, riding slowly along the road, overtook a young woman travelling in the same direction on foot. She looked timidly into his waggon, and asked if she could be permitted to ride to a certain distance on her journey. The minister assented, and she ascended the vehicle. When all was adjusted, and they had begun to move on again, he said to her, "What would you think, if at the end of our ride, you should find I was a clergyman, and had not spoken a word about religion to you all the way?" "Why, sir, I should be obliged to think that you had not done your duty." "Well, then," he rejoined, "You must let me do my duty now."—He began, and occupied the whole distance, in explaining and enforcing "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" and had the satisfaction of putting her down, at parting, to all appearance, deeply impreseed, if not powerfully awakened. O that all clergymen were like this one! but all are not so. A young lady in Massachusetts, who had taken offence at another individual of the same character, for a similar proceeding, expressed her disapprobation of his conduct, by saying, "they are not all like him; there is Mr. ———, a pious, excellent man; I was with him six weeks, and he never introduced the subject of religion at all." It is related in the memoir of the excellent Grimshaw, that "He embraced every favourable opportunity of speaking to strangers whom he met or overtook on the road; and if they were disposed to hear him, he would alight, when on horseback, address them with a serious and pathetic exhortation, commend them to the blessing of the Lord by prayer, and then resume his journey. It will not be ascertained till the great day how many persons received their first religious impressions from these unexpected interviews. But some were known to himself and his people, in whom the good seed of the word, thus sown upon the highway, took deep root, and brought forth fruit unto life." Some professors of religion on reading these quotations, will become eloquent in denouncing Ministers for neglecting to improve their opportunities: but stop your eloquent strains until you

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have answered satisfactorily the following queries: Have you done your duty in this respect? If not, it ill becomes you to rail at ministers, for it is as much your duty to do good, as you have opportunity, as it is theirs. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" Then, again, if a minister neglects his duty will his neglect justify thee at the bar of God for not performing thine? Surely not. If ministers do neglect their duty, "What is that to thee, follow thou me." Do you perform your duty to Christ and to the souls of men, let ministers do as they will; for you "must give an account of yourself to God." "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant, to his own master he standeth or falleth?"—Rom. xiv. 4. If all ministers and private members would improve every opportunity of doing good to the souls of men, hundreds and thousands would be saved, who otherwise will live in sin and perish, though Christ has died for them. Let this consideration humble us all on account of past unfaithfulness, and cause us, in future, to redeem the opportunities we may be favoured with.

*We should redeem our opportunities of doing good to the souls of men, for they may be few, and, if neglected, may not occur again.* We may, in fact, only have one opportunity of doing good to some individuals. The following touching anecdote of the late Dr. Chalmers, speaks volumes on this point:—"Dr. Chalmers, on his return from England, a few years ago, lodged in the house of a nobleman, not far distant from Peebles. The doctor is known to excel in conversation, as well as in the pulpit. He was the life and soul of the conversation in the circle of friends at the nobleman's fire-side. The subject was pauperism—its causes and cure. Among the gentlemen present was a venerable old highland chieftain, who kept his eyes fastened on Dr. C., and listened with intense interest to his communications. The conversation was continued to a late hour. When the company broke up, they were shown to their several apartments. There was a lobby of considerable length, and the doors of the bed-chambers opened right and left. The apartment of Dr. C. was directly opposite to that of the old chieftain, who had already retired with his attendant. As the doctor was undressing himself, he heard an unusual noise in the chieftain's room; the noise was succeeded by a heavy groan! He hastened into the apartment, which was in a few minutes filled with the company, who all rushed in to the relief of the old gentlemen. It was a melancholy sight which met their eyes. The ven-

orable white-headed chief had fallen into the arms of his attendants in an apoplexy. He breathed for a few moments, and then expired. Dr. C. stood in silence, with both hands stretched out, and bending over the deceased. He was the very picture of distress. He was the first to break silence. "Never in my life," said he, in a tremulous voice, "did I see, or did I feel, before this moment, the meaning of that text, 'Preach the word: be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine! Had I known that my venerable old friend was within a few minutes of eternity, I would not have dwelt on that subject which formed the topic of this evening's conversation. I would have addressed myself earnestly to him. I would have preached unto him and you, Christ Jesus and him crucified. I would have urged him and you, with all the earnestness befitting the subject, to prepare for eternity. You would have thought it, and you would have pronounced it, out of season. But, ah! it would have been in season, both as it respected him, and as it respects you." How forcibly does this anecdote remind us of the importance of redeeming every opportunity we have for doing good. When you are tempted to let an opportunity for doing good to any sinner slip, remember Dr. Chalmers and the Highland Chief.

*We should redeem our opportunities for doing good, for they will soon end.* "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."—John ix. 4. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."—Eccles. ix. 10. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that *that day* should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation."—1 Thess. v. 4—8. The shortness of human life, the uncertainty of death, the certain knowledge that we cannot labour for the salvation of souls when dead, the profession we make as children of the day, should induce us to watch and be sober, and embrace every opportunity we have for doing good to the souls of men. If we are sluggish, and

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let the opportunities of doing good pass unimproved, we may become accessories to the ruin of many immortal souls. The period in which we can only do sinners good, is fast passing away. The night is coming when no man can work. If we delay doing good to sinners; wrapped in ignorance, covered with guilt, stained with pollutions, they will have passed away to the regions of black despair, and the blood of their souls will be found on our garments at the last day; but if, on the other hand, we arouse ourselves to exertion, and embrace every opportunity to save souls, we shall be successful in, at least, saving some from the bottomless pit, and bringing them to holiness, to God, and to heaven. These considerations should induce us to redeem the time we spend in the company of the ungodly, for their present and eternal good. Besides, we ourselves will soon have to leave this stage of action. A few more rising and setting suns, and the place which now knows us, will know us no more for ever. Then we shall have no opportunity for saving souls, extending Christ's kingdom on earth, and increasing our weight of glory. For in heaven believers rest from their labours. If we get to heaven, there are no souls to be saved there; for all are saved: and should we get to hell, through our unfaithfulness, we can give nothing in exchange for our own souls, nor do any thing for the salvation of the miserable beings by whom we should then be surrounded; for all in hell cannot be saved. They are lost for ever and ever. If we mean to do good, to save souls, and secure our own salvation, it must be done here. Surely, then, we ought to improve our present opportunities, and not put off till to-morrow what we have an opportunity to do to-day. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

*You should redeem your opportunities of doing good, for you will have to give a strict account of them at the last day. "God requireth that which is past." He will shortly call you to give an account of the manner in which you have acted toward the ungodly, and for the improvement or non-improvement of the opportunities of doing good you have enjoyed, and if you have improved every opportunity, great will be the reward of your diligence and faithfulness, for "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." If you diligently and faithfully improve your opportunities of doing good, the righteous judge will say unto you, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been*



Faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And while God thus applauds your conduct, and welcomes you to everlasting bliss, those whom you have been agents in saving will turn upon you eyes beaming with gratitude, and love, and joy, while they say, Amen, to the blessed sentence of your judge. But, on the other hand, if you neglect to improve your opportunities for doing good to the souls of your fellow men, you cannot escape the frown of the Judge, nor the punishment due to your negligence. Then you will discover that the opportunities, which you now neglect, are talents that God will require a strict account of. If you go on neglecting your opportunities to do good to sinners, by warning, reproving, and exhorting them, they will be swift witnesses against you in that day. You will, you must meet them at the bar of God. They will then fix their burning eyes upon you. Oh! that look will pierce your inmost soul, and fill you with dread; and, addressing the judge, they will say: "These men, these women, professed thy name, knew thy will, enjoyed thy favour: but they, in all their intercourse with us, never warned us of the evil and danger of sin, never exhorted us to flee from the wrath to come, never pointed us to Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and hence we are here in our guilt, in our pollution, in our misery; lost, lost, lost, for ever." What will be your feelings then, when these sinners, to whom you are now afraid to speak about their souls, or whose souls you criminally neglect, will be witnesses against you, and who, when the eternal Judge says unto you "Depart from me ye accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," will say Amen, to your damnation? Your misery will be great, for while sinners who have never been converted will receive the "few stripes," you must receive the "many stripes." "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."—Luke xii. 47, 48. "The antithesis in this passage," observes Bishop Jebb, "has prodigious moral depth: he who sins against knowledge, though his sins were only sins of omission, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who sins without knowledge, though his sins were sins of commis-

sion, shall be beaten only with few stripes. Mere negligence, against the light of conscience, shall be severely punished, while an offence, in itself comparatively heinous, if committed ignorantly, and without light, shall be mildly dealt with."—Sac. Lit., page 201. Neglecting opportunities to do good to the souls of men is a ruinous sin; it will destroy our piety here, and rob us of heaven hereafter.

Walk, then, in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Humble yourselves before God on account of your past unfaithfulness. You, with the preacher, can call to mind many opportunities which have been allowed to pass unimproved. Let us go to the throne of grace, and confess that guilt, and seek forgiveness through the blood of the covenant. Our sins of omission can be cancelled; for "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin." And having obtained forgiveness, let us "Go and sin no more." In the strength of grace let us, in future, "As we have opportunity, do good unto all men."

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." To this end, apply your hearts unto wisdom. Study how to gain the affections of sinners, how you may best awaken them to a sense of their danger, and how you may effectually draw them to the cross of Christ, that they may be saved. Read the bible much, and let it dwell in you richly in all wisdom. One passage from that blessed word will, when fitly spoken, and rightly applied, do more to save the soul, than all you can advance. "It is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." Seek, also, by fervent prayer, the divine skill you need to enable you to win souls to Christ. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."—James i. 5—8. Have a single eye to the glory of God, exercise unwavering faith in God, ask for the wisdom you need, and immortal souls will be saved through your efforts, and you will secure for yourselves a great and an imperishable reward.

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## DISCOURSE VII.

### CONSISTENCY OF CONDUCT REQUISITE TO SAVE SOULS.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel; but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—MATTHEW v. 14, 15, 16.

How very erroneous is the world's estimate of the worth of true Christians! The apostle John might well say, "The world knoweth us not." Christians are too often regarded, by wordlings, as the filth and offscouring of all things; but Christ declares that they are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. And, notwithstanding there may be hypocrites and formalists in the church—tares among the wheat, yet, the little of real piety there is in the Church of Christ preserves the world from total corruption and universal darkness. Bad as the church is, all the moral purity and spiritual light found on earth reside in her: the world is indebted to the church for every thing that is lofty in sentiment, noble in principle, and excellent in morals. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," in the world, the church may justly claim the glory. Christians are the men who think on these things, who lead the way in their adoption, who labour zealously and constantly for their establishment. Whenever, since the world began, was it known that ungodly men took the first step in promoting works which have for their object the glory of God and the best interests of men? When the men of the world can show, that either they or their predecessors have begun, continued, and perfected any work that has glorified God and benefited man, and that Christians stood aloof and would not lend their aid, then may the world call believers scum, filth, the offscouring of all things; but until they can do this, they had better moderate their pretensions, and withhold the reproach they now so freely heap upon those who are as much superior to them as light is superior to darkness. Look abroad in this desert world in,

which we live, and you will find nothing but evil, save where the church of Christ has a habitation and a name. Where the religion of Jesus is found, there love, peace, righteousness, and joy exist. The temporal condition even of the ungodly is immeasurably superior, where the Church of Christ is established, to what their condition is who dwell where Satan's seat is, and where the religion of Christ is not known. But we cannot stop to discuss this subject; nor should we have dwelt upon it for a moment, but for its obvious connexion with the text. Either Jesus Christ was egregiously mistaken, in reference to the worth of real Christians, or the men of the world are sadly in the dark upon this subject. Christ cannot err. He is the true and faithful witness: we must, therefore, conclude with John, that "The world knoweth us not;" and nothing but ignorance, presumption, and malice can cause the world to malign the followers of Christ. "Ye are the light of the world," &c. The text directs our own attention to the following important points:

- I. The Christian's exalted position.
  - II. The consistency required.
  - III. The motive by which it is urged.
- I. Let us consider the Christian's exalted position.

*The position which Christians occupy in this world, is the most important and responsible that can be conceived.* The position of a captain of a ship is both an important and a responsible one; for the lives of those on board are dependent upon the knowledge, skill, prudence, and presence of mind which he possesses. A captain of a ship once said, in answer to a remark on his carefulness in avoiding danger, "It is necessary that I should be very careful, because I have souls on board. I think of my responsibility; and should any thing happen, through carelessness, I should have a great deal to answer for. I wish never to forget, sir, that souls are very valuable." The station of a guide, in an eastern desert, is a most important and responsible one. He is *instead of eyes* to those who are under his care and protection, and the lives of the whole caravan depend on his faithfulness; but the station of Christians is far more important, far more responsible, than either that of a captain or a guide; forasmuch as the present happiness and the future bliss, or the present misery and the future damnation of millions of immortal souls depend upon the faithfulness or un-

faithfulness of the professors of the religion of Jesus. "Ye are the light of the world." "As the sun is lighted up in the firmament of heaven, to diffuse its light and heat freely to every inhabitant of the earth:" so are Christians lighted up to diffuse the light of divine knowledge, and the warmth of divine love throughout the moral world. God uses the sun to enlighten, quicken, and gladden the natural world; and he has made choice of Christians to enlighten, and quicken, and gladden the dark, the dead, and the miserable souls of men. Without the light of the sun, the world in which we live would be filled with darkness, and misery, and death; and unless Christians let their light shine, all will be darkness, misery, and death in the moral world.

*Look at the position in which Christians are placed.* They stand in a dark, benighted world, surrounded by hundreds of millions of human beings, whose minds are blinded by the god of this world; whose hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; whose lives are corrupt and abominable; and who, in their blindness, and hard-heartedness, and pollution, are existing under the curse of Jehovah, and are hastening on, with the rapidity of time, to the blackness of darkness for ever; that horrible and terrific midnight on which no sun of righteousness ever arises with healing in his wings, and over which the star of hope never twinkles to enlighten the gloom, and give the promise of day. The state of those by whom Christians are surrounded, is thus described in the scriptures: "Sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death: being bound with affliction and iron. Dead in trespasses and sins. Lying in the wicked one. Alienated from the life of God. Without Christ. Having no hope. Without God in the world. The wrath of God abideth on them. To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." What a volume of meaning does each scripture contain. Study them, ye Christians, that ye may know the station you occupy. You are placed in the midst of this darkness, and death, and wickedness, and despair, and wrath, that, by your light, you may guide the millions who are enduring these things to Christ, that they may be saved from all, and raised to light, life, holiness, hope, and eternal bliss. Responsible position! Glorious privilege!

*You possess the means requisite to fill this exalted position, with credit to yourselves, with honour to your God, and with advantage to your fellow-men. You can guide your fellow-men into the ways of peace, holiness, and everlasting life;*

for you have the light that is requisite to accomplish this glorious end. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."—2 Cor. iv. 6, 7. Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."—John ix. 5. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—John viii. 12. "Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine." These statements show that the followers of Christ have received the light needed to save the world, and that, in his absence from the world, they are to supply his place, and be the enlighteners of this dark, benighted earth.

Previous to the incarnation of Christ, and the establishment of the gospel church, this light, in a small measure, was possessed by the Jews, and they were the light of the world. Hence, Paul, in addressing his objecting countryman, says, "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law."—Rom ii. 17–20. Though the Jews had only the form of knowledge and of truth in the law: though they lived only in the twilight of the saving knowledge of God, yet it was their duty to guide the blind, to give light to them that sat in darkness, to teach the foolish, and instruct the babes. God called them his witnesses. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God."—Isa. xliii. 10–12. Though the Jews had only the form of knowledge and truth in the law, yet they had overpowering evidences of the existence of God: of his wisdom, his power, his justice, his goodness: of his ability and willingness to save. They were required, by their obe-

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dience to God's commands, and by their holy lives, to bear witness for God in the midst of the idolatrous nations which surrounded them. And when they bore a faithful testimony for God, he ever blessed and prospered them ; but when they obscured their light, by their remissness, and placed it under a bushel, by their sins, then did God visit them with stripes, and send them into captivity. On one occasion, he said, "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah : I, even I, will tear and go away ; I will take away, and none shall rescue. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face : in their affliction they will seek me early."—Hosea v. 14, 15.

If the Jews, then, had sufficient light to stand as beacons on the shores of time, and warn the idolatrous nations of the fatal shipwreck which awaited them, if they did not forsake their idolatries, and turn to the living and true God : if they had light sufficient to reveal to the dark and benighted sons of men the existence, wisdom, power, justice, holiness, and goodness of the great Creator : if they had light sufficient to reveal to them his ability to save, and his readiness to forgive : and if they were punished severely when they hid their light under a bushel, surely Christians have sufficient light to enlighten those who now sit in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace. And most certainly a sorer punishment will fall upon us than ever fell upon the Jews, if we hide our light under a bushel.

The Christian Church may, most assuredly, be addressed in the spirit-stirring language of Isaiah, "Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee : for the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."—1 John v. 20. The Christian Church has not only the form, the outline, the shadow of truth, which the Jewish Church possessed, but it has, in addition to these, the substance of grace and truth. The Jews only saw through a glass darkly the riches of gospel truth and grace. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2-Cor. iii. 17. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt

among us, (and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for (upon) grace,"—John i. 14, 16. All Christians having been transformed into the image of Christ, and having received from Christ a fulness of truth and grace, according to the measure of their understandings and their faith, they are said to be light in the Lord, and are designated the children of the day, and lights in the world. Christians, moreover, are placed in the candlesticks, or the numerous churches of Christ which are scattered up and down this world, for the express purpose of shining as lights in the world.

Know then, ye followers of Christ, that ye do possess, or ought to possess, the light that is requisite to save your fellow men from spiritual darkness and eternal despair. By the light which you have received, you are aware of the awful condition in which your unconverted fellows are placed. You know something of the misery of sin in this life, and of the torments of that hell to which sinners are even now condemned; for, in addition to what is stated in the Bible concerning the misery of sin here, and the place of torment into which sinners must go hereafter, when you were convinced of sin, the sorrows of death compassed you about, the pains of hell gat hold upon you: you found trouble and sorrow. You then felt that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God. The misery of sin, and the thought of its punishment, crushed you in the dust; and if eternity had only been stamped upon the anguish you then endured, you know that it would have been a hell sufficient for you. You know enough of the pains of hell by the word of God and your own experience to induce you, if you have any compassion, to save others with fear—pulling them out of the fire. You know that sinners may be saved from that destruction, for Christ has died for them. Pluck the brands, then, from the burning instantly, lest they be so scorched by sin that they can never be renewed; but must be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

You are acquainted with the righteousness, peace, and joy which believers possess in this world; you have also the foretaste, and the earnest of the bliss of heaven; for you have experienced the forgiveness of sins, and the sanctification of your natures. You enjoy fellowship with God and with his Son Jesus Christ; you have the Holy Spirit, the blessed Comforter, dwelling in your hearts; you find a sweetness in

the ordinances of religion, and untold pleasure in the study of the holy scriptures ; you have glorious visions of eternal day ; you are well assured that you have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; you are perfectly aware that the glory and bliss of heaven exceed all finite conception ; you know that the inheritance of heaven is a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory—a “fulness of joy,”—and connected with it are “pleasures for evermore :” for these things are stated in the scriptures ; and you have been “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Hide not then your light under a bushel, but reveal to the ungodly what great things the Lord has done for you and has promised to do for you. Exert yourselves to bring your fellow men to the possession of what you enjoy ; for the blessings of religion and the glories of heaven are as much needed by your unconverted neighbours as by you. Go, and compel them to come in, that Christ’s house may be filled, and that they may be saved.

Still farther, you, my Christian brethren, know the way to escape the corruption of sin and the damnation of hell : the way to secure the joys of holiness below, and then the joys of heaven. You have effected the passage from *death to life*. You know the way to the *cross* ; for you have been at it, and found peace through the blood of its victim. You know the way to the *fountain* ; for in it you have washed away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. You know the road to the city of *refuge* ; for you have fled to the hope set before you, and found in Jesus a hiding place from the storm of divine wrath, and protection from the avenger of blood. You know where *the stone, the tried stone, the precious corner stone, the sure foundation lies* ; for ye, as lively stones, are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Who, then, are so well qualified to conduct sinners to the Saviour as you are ? Angels could not do it more surely. You are more fitted for this blessed work than they are ; for you know the fears, the perplexities, the temptations, the agonies of an awakened soul. Your experimental knowledge of the way to the cross, to the kingdom of grace, to the fountain, to the refuge, and to the foundation, preeminently qualifies you to guide sinners to the Saviour : to bring them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgive-

ness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus. If you rightly think upon the light of the gospel which you possess; the experimental knowledge of the miseries of sin; the blessedness of holiness which you have; and the practical acquaintance of the road that leads from death to life that you have acquired, you must own that you have the means requisite to fill your exalted station, as the light of the world, with credit to yourselves, with honour to your Saviour, and with advantage to your fellow-men.

*The means you possess to glorify God, in the salvation of men, it is your imperative duty to employ to their utmost extent.* "Is a candle bought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?"—Mark iv. 21. Only those who have had desires put a candle under a bushel, or under a bed. "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light."—Luke viii. 16. Can we suppose that the Saviour, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, has lighted up our souls with the light of truth, for us to conceal that light from our benighted, perishing, fellow-men? It cannot be. Men do not buy candles to put them under bushels, nor, when they have lighted them, do they cover them with vessels; they are not so foolish as thus to throw their money away. And depend upon it, Jesus Christ has not purchased us with his most precious blood, and redeemed us from all iniquity by his Holy Spirit, for no purpose whatever. He has done this that we might be his peculiar people—zealous of good works: that we might shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. "A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Men do not build cities on lofty eminences for the purpose of concealing them from the gaze of travellers; but they build them on hills, that they may be seen afar off, and attract the notice of men at a great distance. And when the Saviour declared that his people were "A city set on an hill," he undoubtedly meant them to be eminent for piety, conspicuous for zeal and benevolence, that they might be seen far and near. Maundrell, in his travels, says, "A few points toward the north (of Tabor) appears that which they call the mount of Beattitudes, a small rising from which our Saviour delivered his sermon in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew. Not far from this little hill is the city Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia. It

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stands upon a very *eminent and conspicuous* mountain, and is **SEEN FAR AND NEAR**. May we not suppose that Christ alludes to this city in these words of his, "A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Quesnell remarks here, "The Christian life is something very high and sublime, to which we cannot arrive without pains: whilst it withdraws us from the earth, and carries us nearer heaven, it places us in *view*, and as a *mark* for the malice of carnal men." True; but it sets us as a *mark* also for their study, and as a *model* for their imitation. In all that our Lord says in our text, he shows distinctly and forcibly that it is the imperative duty of all Christians to use their utmost exertions to benefit the souls of their unconverted fellow-men.

Christ never intended any of his people

"To be little and unknown,  
Loved and prized by God alone."

These lines, which have been used to loathing by unthinking Christians, and by idlers in the vineyard of the Lord, are false in sentiment, and pernicious in tendency. Those Christians who are "little and unknown," who put their light under a bushel, who are neither eminent for piety, nor conspicuous for zeal, can never be loved and prized by Jehovah. They are just as little loved and prized by God as they generally are by their fellow-men; for those whom God loves and prizes, are those who live near to him, and who "Let their light *so shine* before men, that they seeing their good works, may glorify their Father which is in heaven." Christ has set us on the hill: has given us light; and our duty both to God and man requires us to be eminent for piety and conspicuous for zeal.

"Shall we, whose souls are lighted,  
With wisdom from on high—  
Shall we to men benighted  
The lamp of life deny?"

God forbid. If we do so, we shall be guilty of the ruin of immortal souls, and the curse of heaven will descend upon our guilty heads.

Your duty to use, to the utmost of your ability, the means you possess to save souls, ye Methodists acknowledge at every lovefeast, when ye sing these lines:

Sing we then in Jesu's name,  
Now as yesterday the same;  
One in every time and place;  
Full for all of truth and grace.

We for Christ our Master stand,  
 Lights in a benighted land ;  
 We our dying Lord confess ;  
 We are Jesua' witnesses."

According to your own quarterly confession, it is your imperative duty to exhibit the light you possess, for the benefit of the benighted sons and daughters of men. That professing Christian who refuses to let his light shine conspicuously before men, is as much guilty of the murder of souls as that pilot is guilty of the wilful murder of men's bodies, who, either carelessly or designedly, runs his vessel on a rock, and sends the whole of the passengers to the bottom of the sea ; or as that guide is guilty of wilful murder, who extinguishes his torch, just as his followers approach the edge of a tremendous precipice ; and who, through the want of the light, which the unfaithful guide has purposely extinguished, fall over, and are dashed to atoms. By not letting your light shine, sinners are shipwrecked, and drop into the lake of fire and brimstone. By concealing your light, they take a leap in the dark, and fall over the precipice of time into the gulf of perdition.

It is not a matter of choice with us whether we let our light shine or not : it is a matter of imperative duty. Our Lord and Master positively commands us to let our light shine before men : the men of the world absolutely need the aid of the light we possess, to guide them to the Saviour ; and we have voluntarily taken upon ourselves both the name and the office of Christians. It is, therefore, at the peril of our own immortal souls, at the risk of our own eternal salvation, when we refuse to let our light shine before men. The eternal Judge will as sure sentence us to eternal death, if we refuse to obey his command—"Let your light so shine,"—as ever the king in the parable condemned to perpetual banishment and horrors his slothful servant, who had not improved the property which he committed to his trust. We are stewards of the manifold grace of God. A steward is one that is entrusted with the management of the property of another, which he is expected to use as his master requires ; and if he squander it, or appropriate it to his own use, he is justly punished by the law. And God will do so to us, and more also, if we refuse to let our light shine for the benefit of others. He will judge us unworthy of eternal life, and give us our portion with hypocrites and unbelievers.

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Consider,

II. The consistency required in performing the duties of this exalted position.

There must be an entire agreement between our profession and our acts, or the men of the world will never be, by us, spiritually benefitted. By becoming Christians, we declare ourselves to be the light of the world; therefore, both God and man expect us to walk as children of light; and if we do not walk in love, and purity, and joy, and benevolence, God cannot be glorified, and men cannot be benefitted by our conduct. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works."

TO ACT CONSISTENTLY WITH THE HIGH OFFICE WE FILL, WE MUST PERFORM GOOD WORKS. "It is not sufficient to have light: we must walk in the light and by the light. Our whole conduct should be a perpetual comment on the doctrine we have received, and a constant exemplification of its power and truth." "Whatsoever," saith Paul, "doth make manifest, is light," whether it be our prayers, or our conversations, or our actions, which reveal the deformity or misery of sin, the beauty and happiness of holiness, that is light. But in the text our actions are principally referred to. Men must see our good works, or they cannot be led by them to glorify our Father in heaven. We must walk uprightly, or no man can see that we do walk uprightly; but any man can see that we walk crookedly and inconsistently. Whatever may be the profession we make, we must walk according to the gospel, or our profession is vain; and the loftier our pretensions are, only so much the more harm shall we do, if we walk inconsistently.

To act consistently with the profession of Christianity, we must be found walking in purity. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them; for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."—Ephes. v. 11. "Let us walk decently, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."—Rom. xiii. 13, 14. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what part hath he that be-



lievth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Cor. vi. 14—18; vii. 1. O! it is grievous to see the professed followers of Jesus holding fellowship with the works of darkness, walking disorderly and maliciously, and forming alliances with unbelievers. On account of these things many are weak and sickly in the church; and multitudes are prevented from coming to the Saviour and uniting with the church. These glaring inconsistencies not only damage the cause of Christ, but ruin the souls of men.

*To act consistently with our profession, we must walk peaceably among men.* "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men."—Rom. xii. 18. "Blessed are tee peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."—Matth. v. 9. "Do all things without *murmurings* and *disputings*: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom shine ye as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life."—Phil. ii. 14, 16. A quarrelsome, murmuring, disputing professor is ever a stumbling-block in the way of the salvation of souls; but a peaceable, contented, quiet professor of religion, ever recommends the religion he professes to all who behold his blameless life.

*To act consistently with our profession, we must be upright in all our dealings with our fellow-men.* "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."—Math. vii. 12. "Provide things honest in the sight of all men."—Rom. xii. 17. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the

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will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."—1 Peter ii. 12—15. Those walk most inconsistently who, while professing godliness, take every advantage of their fellow-men in the way of business, who refuse to pay their just debts in due season, and who cheat the revenue of the country by their smuggling practices. Sinners observe these things, and they are another stumbling-block in the way of their salvation.

*To act consistently with our profession, we must exhibit genuine benevolence to the unfortunate, the poor, and the afflicted.* Read the tenth chapter of Luke, from the 25th to the 37th verse, and in the parable of that good Samaritan you will discover how a Christian ought to act to all his fellow-creatures who are overtaken by calamities. "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which, by interpretation, is Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did."—Acts ix. 36. She died; but she was so beloved, that the disciples sent for Peter to raise her again; and when he came, "All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." Blessed woman! Consistent saint! Thy light was not put under a bushel, nor were thy labours ineffectual. Witness the anxiety of the disciples to have her restored, and the flowing tears of the weeping widows. "But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"—1 John iii. 17. It may dwell in his creed, but it dwelleth not in his heart. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."—James vii. 27. That professor of religion who has means at his command, and helps not the unfortunate, relieves not the pressing wants of the poor, and visits not the afflicted, acts most inconsistently with his profession. Sinners see this gross neglect of duty, and this is another stumbling-block in the way of their salvation.

*To act consistently with our profession, we must attend faithfully to the discharge of all domestic and relative duties.* "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. . . . But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—

1 Tim. v. 4, 8. It would be well for every Christian to read this chapter to the end of the 16th verse. The relative duties of Christians, as husbands and wives, parents and children, servants and masters, and subjects, are clearly explained and powerfully enforced in Ephesians v. 22, 33; and vi. 1—9: in the whole of the 2nd chapter of Titus, and also the 3rd chapter, 1, 2 verses.

These are the good works that Christians must perform, to be consistent with their profession. We ought to provoke one another to love and good works. Some professors of religion are ever decrying good works; but we must not heed their clamour; for Paul says, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will also that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. . . . And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."—Titus iii. 8, 14. And in our text the Saviour says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works." And if we do not walk in purity, in peace, in uprightness, in benevolence, and faithfully discharge all our domestic and relative duties, depend upon it we shall become accessories to the ruin of immortal souls, and shall be lost ourselves at last.

TO ACT CONSISTENTLY WITH OUR PROFESSION, OUR LIGHT MUST SHINE IN THAT MANNER THAT WILL ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF OUR FELLOW-MEN. "Let your light *so* shine before men, that they may see your good works." That which the eye sees not, the heart feels not. That which we know not, can have no influence upon us. And here the question arises, how must our light shine so that men may see our good works? The Saviour says, "Let your light *so* shine." The word *so* is very expressive. It signifies in such a manner, and to such a degree. This adverb is used to express the infinite love of God in the gift of his Son. "God *so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The love of God is indistinguishable: there is an eternity of meaning in the particle *so* in this passage. God *so* loved the world, in such a manner, and to such a degree, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life. The word *so* in our text expresses the thought, that we must let our light shine in that manner, and to that degree, that men may be converted by it.

*To secure this end, our light must shine brilliantly.* A dull light is not of much use. It only makes darkness the more gloomy. Our path must be like the shining light, increasing in brilliancy to the perfect day. There must be on our part entire consecration of ourselves to God's service. We must not leave men in doubt whether we are the Lord's or not. We must unite with God's church, and ever be found zealously labouring in some of the departments of Christian labour which the church has for the talents of every lover of Christ. We must so act in the church, and in the world, that no one for a moment can hesitate whether we are pious or not. We must never perform any doubtful actions; but we must act so conscientiously, humbly, and benevolently, that all who have any knowledge of us may be forced to confess, if they speak the truth, that we are Christians indeed, in whom is no guile. We must so live, that all men may see that God's glory and man's spiritual and eternal welfare are the ends we seek; and not our own personal ease, personal interest, and personal aggrandizement. Our conduct must be brilliant: for we must exhibit holiness in its beauty and in its power, in all we do, before men will glorify our Father who is in heaven. And when the men of the world are fully convinced, by our good works, that we are Christians indeed, then they will feel the force of every prayer, pay attention to every statement, and weigh well every reproof which passes our lips. The tenor of our lives will fill them with admiration, and powerfully constrain them to seek the religion of Jesus.

*To secure the salvation of souls, our light must shine steadily.* Our conduct must not be as inconstant as a revolving light if we would benefit the souls of men. We must not at one time be warm and active in religion, and at another cold and sluggish; but we must every day, every week, every month, and every year of our lives, till God calls us to heaven, steadily seek those things which are above, and steadily aim at the salvation of men. If there is any staggering in our deportment, sinners see it immediately, and lay hold of our inconsistency as an argument why they should not become pious. Unsteady professors of religion cause the ungodly to reason thus: "These unsteady professors puzzle us. Sometimes they are so affectionate, and persuasive, and zealous, that they almost persuade us to be Christians; at others, they are so cold, and shy, and distant, that we are puzzled to think what kind of a thing religion is." Thus the little unsteady-

ness which many Christians manifest in *the manner of their intercourse* with the ungodly, at different times, has a very bad influence on their minds. But, when that unsteadiness extends to principle and actions, its influence is tenfold more injurious. When professors of religion are found at times guilty of a violation of principle to gain their ends, or when they commit really sinful acts, through unwatchfulness, or any other cause, the men of the world mark those deviations from rectitude and purity, and are often heard to express themselves thus: "These professors of religion are an awful people. They are sometimes so devotional in spirit, so regular in speech, so pious in action, that they win our affections, and almost compel us to be pious; but at others, they manifest such a worldly spirit, give way to such improper discourse, and perform such wicked acts, that we are ashamed of them and the religion they profess." Let any professor of religion manifest, at any time, a bitter, revengeful spirit; let him indulge only at times in impure or malicious conversation; let him now and then get drunk, or tell lies, or cheat his fellow-men, or do any thing else that is evil, and he does a greater injury to religion, puts a greater barrier in the way of the salvation of the souls of men, than all the infidels in the town in which he resides could do in twelve months. The men of the world charge our inconsistencies on the religion we profess; and hence, it is of the utmost importance that Christians have their hearts established with grace, and that they see to it that their spirit, and conversation, and actions, are ever as it becometh the gospel. Let, then, your light shine steadily, if you would give no sinner ground for profaning the name of the Lord, and for excusing himself from becoming a Christian.

*To secure the salvation of souls, our light must shine constantly.* We must be Christians indeed, under all circumstances, at all times, and in all places, if we would save our fellow-men from sin and death. We must be Christians indeed, in prosperity and adversity, in health and in sickness, in safety and in danger, in evil report and good report. We must be Christians indeed, through the week as well as on the Sabbath, on high-days and holidays, as well on the ordinary days of our mortal existence. We must be Christians every where, at home and abroad, in the market, in the store, in the family circle, as well as in the sanctuary; we must exhibit the mind of the Saviour, and show to all that we have "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Our tradesmen, our work-

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men, our servants, our wives, our children, our relations, our neighbours, our casual acquaintance, and all with whom we come in contact, must both see and feel that we are in reality what we profess to be—sincere followers of the blessed Redeemer, who knew no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile, and then sinners will be benefitted by our light. If we are Christians in every thing; if in all our dealings with mankind, under all circumstances, at all times, and in all places, we exhibit the knowledge, the integrity, the purity, the benevolence of the sincere Christian, men will see our good works, and will, most assuredly, glorify our Father in heaven.

THIS CONSISTENCY OF CONDUCT, ON THE PART OF CHRISTIANS, IS ABSOLUTELY NEEDED TO SAVE SOULS.

*It is needed because the men of the world form their estimate of religion by the conduct of its professors.* Men, in their unconverted state, do not form their views of religion from the doctrines and precepts of the Bible. They seldom read the Bible; and its truths they neither understand nor believe. They look to the lives of professors for proofs of the truth and value of religion. They think that if the religion of Jesus be good, it will produce good fruits in the lives of its professors. The men of the world are eminently practical men, and they want to see practical proofs of the excellency of religion before they embrace it. And, therefore, when a professor of religion walks inconsistently, disorderly, the men of the world do not merely blame the inconsistent professor, but they charge his inconsistencies on the religion he professes. Christians are the epistles of Christ, read and known of all men; and when any of these epistles are soiled by irregularities, blotted by inconsistencies, those who read them regard the Saviour in a very unfavourable light. Commercial men have repeatedly told us, that they would sooner do business with the men of the world than with professors of religion; for there is such shuffling and dishonesty with *many professors*, that they are afraid of dealing with *any*. What a foul blot is this upon the Christian name! What an injury to the cause of Christ! What an impediment to the salvation of souls! To wipe away this blot, to repair this injury, to remove this impediment, Christians must let their light shine so brilliantly, so steadily, so constantly, that they may for ever put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. We say, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; for the con-



duct of professors is no argument against religion itself, any more than the existence of counterfeit money is a reason why we should refuse to receive and use the sterling gold. If all the professors of religion in the world were hypocrites, the religion of Christ would be still the same; would have the same paramount claims on the intellect, affections, and practice of man, as it would if every professor of religion in the world were an Israelite indeed. If there were no sterling metal, there could be no base coin; and if there were no genuine religion, there could be no hypocrisy. But, still, we must deal with men as we find them; and as the unconverted do form their estimate of the worth of religion from the conduct of its professors, there must be consistency in the deportment of Christians, if the ungodly are to be saved.

*This consistency of conduct is needed, because it will do more to convince and convert the ungodly than any thing else we can imagine.* Had we the tongues of men and of angels; could we address sinners on the subject of religion in the highest strains of human eloquence, or in the sweetest notes of angelic oratory, still, without consistency of conduct, we could produce no lasting impression on their minds, and effect no saving good in their hearts and lives. Had we the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries, and all knowledge; had we faith so that we could remove mountains; had we the highest degree of human benevolence, and even a martyr's zeal; yet, without consistency of conduct, we should profit sinners nothing: sinners would regard all we said and did as a splendid cheat—a gilded lie; and though they might weep under our eloquence, and stand amazed at our gifts, yet their hearts would remain as hard as a stone. No penitence for sin, no faith in Christ, no love to the Redeemer, no serious determination to forsake sin and to turn to God, would be produced in their hearts. After all our efforts, they would continue in the valley of sin and death, and urge onward in the way that leads to destruction. But when there is consistency of conduct on our part, then a very different result follows. Sinners then believe we are in earnest; they feel that we mean what we say; they believe that it is the deep conviction of the truth of what we utter, that causes us to interest ourselves on their behalf. Our holy lives carry conviction to their minds; demonstrate to them the truth and value of religion; and hence they are troubled on account of their sins, and intensely desire to be delivered from them. When an unconverted man beholds the genuine,

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unostentatious piety of a real Christian, he is ashamed of his own wickedness, and wishes to be like that truly good man. "O!" says he, "if I were only like that good man, how happy should I be, and how happy would my family be! And why cannot I be like him? He was once as great a sinner as I am now; it is religion that has made the difference; by the help of God I will seek it, and see if it will not effect as great a change in me, as it has done in him." Influenced by your zealous efforts, and won by the consistency of your conduct, sinners begin to seek the Lord with their whole hearts, and soon begin to live

" All the life of heaven above,  
All the life of glorious love."

Hundreds and thousands have, by the example of consistent believers, been induced thus to think, and feel, and act. This you know is truth. If, then, you wish to save souls, it is absolutely necessary for you to manifest Christian consistency in all your deportment. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.

*Consistency of conduct is needed to secure the blessing of God upon our efforts to save souls.* If we do not act consistently with our profession, Jehovah will not smile upon our endeavours, and succeed our labours. "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my words into thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentest with him, and hast been partakers with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, and slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." —Psalm l. 16—21. Read this passage, ye inconsistent professors of religion, and you will discover that God, instead of blessing your efforts, to the conversion of souls, will reprove you for your inconsistencies, and set them in order before your eyes. You may abhor the detestable vices of theft and uncleanness; but if you give your mouths to evil, and your tongues frame deceit; yea, more, if you only sit and speak against your brother, and indulge in slander, these glaring inconsistencies will shut God's merciful ears to your prayers, and cause him to withhold his blessing from your

labours. He will often reprove you for these inconsistencies, and set them in order before your eyes, by the very sinners you wish to benefit. They will not fail to remind you of your inconsistencies, when you reprove them of sin, and exhort them to forsake it. Your duty to God and the souls of men require you to rectify every thing that is wrong in yourselves. Christ has raised you up to reflect the honour of God upon the world, and guide the erring sons of men to truth, to holiness, to heaven; therefore, you should remove every inconsistency from your hearts and lives, so that by them you may not obscure the glory of God, and obstruct the salvation of men.

"Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord," that God may bless your labours; and that sinners, instead of being repelled, by your inconsistencies, may be drawn to Christ by your beauty and your strength. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city:" that God may be with you in his saving power, and that sinners, attracted by your beauty, and conquered by your strength, may "Ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, which shall not be forgotten."—Jer. li. 5.

Consider

III. The motive by which it is urged.

The motive which urges us to this consistency is, that sinners may be brought to glorify our Father who is in heaven. God's glory is always the same in itself; but he is said to be glorified by whatever makes his glory manifest to the minds of his intelligent creatures. The conversion of sinners most strikingly displays the Glory of God. In this event we behold the glory of his infinite wisdom, his inflexible justice, his almighty power, and his boundless love.

*Sinners, who are influenced by your holy example to seek religion, will glorify God in their conversion.* When seeking the forgiveness of sin and the regeneration of their hearts, they will glorify God by a candid confession of their own guilt, pollution, misery and danger; by a free and full acknowledgement of their desert of eternal punishment; by grateful thanksgivings to God for not having dealt with them according to their sins, nor rewarding them according to their iniquities. They will glorify God by accepting salvation freely through Christ Jesus: owning that they cannot be

forgiven, and cannot be renewed only through the blood and Spirit of the Lord Jesus. Thus they will magnify his grace. They will glorify God at the time of their conversion by offering sincere and supreme praise to God, for his goodness, saying, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless and praise his holy name."

"Now in a song of grateful praise,  
To my dear Lord my voice I'll raise;  
With all his saints I'll join to tell,  
My Jesus has done all things well.  
How sovereign, wonderful and free,  
Has been his love to sinful me:  
This pluck'd me from the jaws of hell:  
My Jesus has done all things well.  
I spurn'd his grace, I broke his laws,  
And yet he undertook my cause,  
To save me, though I did rebel:  
My Jesus has done all things well."

Thus will the converted sinner praise God; and not only so; but

"Then will he tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour he has found;  
He'll point to his redeeming blood,  
And say, Behold the way to God!"

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me," says the living and the true God; and such glory will be given to him by every saved sinner, at the time of his conversion.

*Sinners, who are brought to God by your consistent labours, will glorify your Father in heaven by their subsequent conduct. They will be found "ordering their conversation aright;" "Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Being made free from sin, and having become the servants of God, they will have their fruit unto holiness. They will now differ so much from their former selves, that the men of the world will take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. Christ having bestowed upon them the blessings of his grace; upon them being found the fruits of righteousness, men will call them "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." "Doing justly, loving mercy, walking humbly with God," they will become agents in the salvation of others. They will not be satisfied with eating their morsel alone; but they will want others to share with them the bread of life.*

According to their ability they will tell their friends what great things the Lord has done for them : how he has opened their blind eyes, clothed them with the garments of salvation, enriched them with his grace, and made them happy in his love ; and they will counsel their fellow sinners to come to Jesus, and buy of him gold tried in the fire, that *they may* be rich ; and white raiment, that *they may* be clothed, and that the shame of *their* nakedness may not appear : and anoint their eyes with eye salve that they may see. Thus will they glorify God, by causing others to come to him for that salvation which is more precious than rubies, more valuable than life.

*Sinners, who are brought to God by your consistent labours, will glorify God in their eternal salvation.* It is said in the second of Thessalonians, that at the last day Christ will "come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." And, my Christian brethren, then will those men who see your good works, and through them glorify your Father who is in heaven, "appear with Christ in glory." They will stand forth in the sight of an assembled world, to the praise of God's glorious grace, and will be found ascribing their salvation to the grace of God as its efficient cause, and to your consistent labours as the effectual means. God will be glorified in the last day by the sinners whom you have saved : for then all the world will see what the grace of God has done for their souls in fitting them for eternal life. Then it will be seen that the glorious gospel of the grace of God, which so many despise, does raise the ignorant, depraved and defiled sinner, who believes it and obeys it, from darkness to light, from selfishness to love, from defilement to holiness, from hell to heaven. The sinners whom you bring, by letting your light shine brilliantly, steadily, and constantly, to glorify your Father who is in heaven, will be eternally found loving, adoring, and serving the great I AM. They will glorify God in the sweetest and loftiest songs of praise ; for they will ever be found ascribing their "salvation to God and the Lamb."

Is not this a sufficient motive to induce a professing christian to let his light shine as it ought ? Do you wish your Father in heaven thus to be glorified in the conversion of sinners, in their subsequent holy lives, and in their final salvation ? If you do, you must act consistently with the high station you fill as the light of the world. You may think you want sinners saved, and God glorified ; but you

are certainly deceived, you do not really desire these things, if you do not "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." On the consistency of your conduct, as you have seen in this discourse, in a great measure depends the salvation of men and the glory of God. Are you acting, then, consistently with your profession? Examine yourselves. We can all, readily enough, discover the inconsistencies of others; but are we ourselves free from all inconsistencies in spirit, in speech, and in action? Have we always manifested that patience, that readiness to forgive, that carefulness in conversation to avoid all injurious words, and that resolute determination to do no wrong act, which we ought to have manifested? Ah, brethren, none of us can lay our hands upon our hearts and say that we have always acted as the lights of the world ought to have acted! We can all, perhaps, call to mind many inconsistencies, and at this time we stand guilty before God. Behold, there is "A fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness."—Zech. xiii. 1. Let us all, both leading men and members, in Christ's church, go to that fountain; for we all need its cleansing waters; and let us wash away the guilt and defilement of our past inconsistencies, and obtain grace to enable us, in future, to "Let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven:" then Christ our master will say to our accusers, "He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone," and none having the hardihood to do this, through being convicted of their own guilt, Jesus will say to each of us, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." In future let us ever bear in mind our deep responsibility, and watch against every being that would tempt, and every thing that would lead us to forget our duty to Christ and the souls of men. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

Ye hypocrites and formalists, we beseech you by the tender mercies of God, by the death of Christ, by the love of the Spirit, by the worth of souls, to seek and obtain true religion. You can never act, as true Christians act, until you obtain the saving grace of God. What pleasure can you possibly find in dishonouring God, in wounding Christ, in grieving the Holy Spirit, and in ruining the souls of men by your numerous and glaring inconsistencies? You need not give up your profession, but give up your hypocrisy and for-

mality. If you think the semblance of piety so good, the form of godliness so excellent, as to cause you to make a profession of religion, depend upon it the substance of religion and the power of Godliness are much better. You profess to be light in the Lord ; but, depend upon it, ye are in darkness ; and can be of no benefit to man until you are enlightened and saved. "The light of the body is the eye : therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light ; but when thine eye is evil, thy body is full of darkness." Your eye is evil ; you do not singly aim at the glory of God and the salvation of men. You profess religion, but only to gain your own pleasure, your own profit, your own honour. If you persist in this course, you will be ruined, and have the mortification, in eternity, to find that you have ruined others. To you the following passage of God's word justly applies:—"Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks ; walk in the light of your fire ; and in the sparks that ye have kindled, This shall ye have of mine hand ; Ye shall lie down in sorrow."—Isaiah l. 11. Away with your hypocrisy and formality ; and seek, by genuine repentance toward God, true faith in the Redeemer's blood, and earnest prayer, the conversion of your souls, or you will be destroyed without remedy.

Unsteady professor of religion, when wilt thou become steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ? When wilt thou afford the world a brilliant, steady, constant light ? The wavering of thy light gives men false views of religion, leads them astray from God, causes them to wander from the paths of peace, and will send them down to hell. Let your constant prayer to the blessed Saviour be, until your heart is established with grace,—

"Jesus, thy all victorious love,  
Shed in my heart abroad ;  
Then shall my feet no longer rove.  
Rooted and fixed in God."

Unless you do become established in grace, you will ever be miserable yourselves, ever a source of uneasiness to the church of Christ, and ever a stumbling block in the way of sinners.

"And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."—2 Tim. ii. 19. Remember, the eyes of the world are ever upon you, and they are watching for your halting ; but never forget that the eyes of the Lord are

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upon you, and he will render unto you according to your works.

Ye men of the world, who make the inconsistencies of the professors of religion a reason for not being pious, remember, *that their inconsistencies do not justify your wickedness.* You are not warranted in rejecting the gospel, in refusing to love God, in crucifying Christ, and in doing despite to the Spirit of grace, because some professors act inconsistently with the religion which they profess. You know what a *Christian should be*, or you would not know when professors act inconsistently : and what a *Christian should be*, your duty, your interest, your honour, your eternal safety require you *to be*. You cannot think of escaping the damnation of hell, if you reject the gospel of Christ, and refuse to live according to its requirements : or, if you do think so, you are only deceiving yourselves. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."



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## DISCOURSE VIII.

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### THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO GIVE A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN THEM, THAT SOULS MAY BE SAVED.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts ; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."—1 Peter iii. 15.

The first Christians had to suffer grievous persecutions. The Jews, as a nation, regarded Christ as an imposter, and his followers as deceivers, who wanted to subvert the religion of their forefathers. On this account they bitterly persecuted the adherents of Christianity in every form that religious bigotry could invent and implacable hatred could accomplish.

The heathen regarded Christianity as an absurdity, and its adherents as fanatics; hence they reproached the followers of Christ, held them up to ridicule and contempt, and persecuted them even unto death.

To fortify the minds of Christians, and enable them to bear calmly and heroically the bitter persecutions of their inhuman tormentors, Peter quotes the purport of the saying of Isaiah, in the eighth chapter of his prophecy, which reads thus: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," says the Apostle in the text. Whoever has the fear of God before his eyes, the dread of his displeasure in his heart, will never slavishly fear man, whose breath is in his nostrils, who can only kill the body, and after that can do no more. The fear of God in the heart, will destroy the fear of corporeal suffering, and will cause a man to go through any bodily afflictions with patience and fortitude; because the man who possesses this fear knows that if he displeases Jehovah, by sinking under his trials, or by disowning his name, to escape the temporal woes to which he is exposed, God has the power to cast him, body and soul, into hell fire; Where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is never quenched.

In order to stop the mouth of gainsayers, and to convince them of the truth, the value, and the reasonableness of the

Christian religion, Peter charges Christians to "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." We are not now subjected to such bitter persecutions as were the first Christians; but still it behoves us to have the fear of God before our eyes, and in our hearts, and to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

The cause of Christ has often suffered through the ignorance of some of its professors, who could not, when asked, give a clear, scriptural, satisfactory reason of their hope; and from the pride, presumption, and insolence of others, who would not give a civil answer to those who have asked a reason of the hope which is in them. It is of the utmost importance to the welfare of religion and the salvation of souls that Christians should be able to give a satisfactory reason of their hope of heaven, to every man that asks for one; nor is it of less importance that they should do this in the spirit of Christianity, i. e., with meekness and fear. These being matters of paramount importance, you, as Christians, are commanded by the Holy Spirit to "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

In discussing this subject, we shall consider,

I. The hope which the Christian possesses.

II. The duty of the Christian to be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of that hope.

III. The manner in which the Christian should answer the questions proposed respecting his hope.

I. The hope which the Christian possesses.

Hope is the desire and expectation of future good. A good writer justly observes:—"Man would be a very miserable being were he not endowed with hope; hope quickens all the still parts of life, and keeps the mind awake in her most indolent hours. No kind of life is so happy as that which is full of hope; especially when the hope is well grounded, and

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when the object of it is in its nature fitted to make the person happy who entertains it."

*The hope of the believer is glorious in its objects.* "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God."—Rom. v. 2. "And hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Peter i. 13. By the Glory of God, in the first of these passages, is meant, that exalted state of blissful perfection, which is the portion of those who dwell with God in heaven. The passage might justly be rendered: "Rejoicing in hope of the Glory which God will bestow." Heaven may be justly termed the Glory of God, because there he sits enthroned in celestial splendour: there he dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto; and there he imparts glory, honour, and eternal life to all who dwell with him in that exalted state of glory and blessedness. By the grace which shall be brought unto believers at the revelation of Jesus Christ, we understand the resurrection of the body, and the complete glorification of the body and soul of the believer, when Christ shall come to judge the world. These two passages embrace the great objects of the believer's hope. His hope respects a future state of being; and is fixed on the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the glory of God, and an eternal life of glory and bliss in the presence of God and the Lamb. All men have hope; but the hope of the believer differs from the hope of the rest of mankind *in its objects*. The hope of men is fixed on the things which *are seen*; but the believer's hope is fixed on the things which *are not seen*. The hope of men is bounded by the narrow limits of earth, and the time that measures it; but the hope of the believer extends far beyond the confines of earth, and reaches though eternity. The rich of this world, who have no hope of heaven, trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; their inward thought is, yea, their highest hope is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. The poor, who are destitute of Christian hope, expect to rise above their present wretched state, and gain a sufficiency of temporal good, to free them from the privations of poverty and the sorrows of indigency. In all the various walks of human life, unrenewed men have no higher hope than that which relates to the present world. But if in this life only Christians have hope in Christ, they are of all men the most miserable. For the sake of Christ they have given up the

world, they abstain from fleshly lusts, they enjoy not the pleasures of sin, which are for a season: therefore, if their hope extends no further than this world, they are indeed of all men the most miserable. The hope of believers, however, does extend beyond the present life. It embraces eternal things, and rejoices in prospect of the glory of God, and of the grace which shall be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

*The hope of the believer is placed on a good foundation.* The "Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, . . . hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.—1 Thess. ii. 16. Every believer has a well grounded hope of eternal glory, with all its unspeakable and inconceivable blessings. The hope of the believer is placed on the perfect sacrifice of Christ:—on His all prevalent intercession:—on the promises of a covenant keeping God:—on the witness of the Holy Spirit to the fact of his adoption into the family of God. These four things are necessary to constitute a sure foundation to rest our hope upon for eternal glory. While a man believes in the sacrifice of Christ, he is pardoned and accepted of God: trusting in the intercession of his risen Lord, he receives grace to help him in every time of need: relying upon the promises of a covenant keeping God, he is not only made a partaker of the divine nature, but he is constantly filled with joy and peace in believing, and made to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost: and honouring the Holy Spirit daily, by avoiding those things which grieve him, by living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit, the blessed Comforter bears witness every moment with his spirit, that he is a child of God and an heir of heaven. On this foundation the believer places his hope, and no other foundation can support his hope; but whoever has his hope placed on this foundation, may sing with Wesley:—

"Fix'd on this ground will I remain,  
Though my heart fail and flesh decay;  
This anchor shall my soul sustain,  
When earth's foundations melt away;  
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,  
Loved with an everlasting love."

Some may object to our placing the witness of the Holy Spirit to the fact of our adoption into the family of God, as one of the foundation-stones of the believer's hope of glory. They may object as long as they please, we dare not blot out the sentence; for we cannot conceive how any man can have a

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reasonable, scriptural hope of heaven who does not enjoy the witness of the Holy Spirit to the fact of his adoption into the family of God. We reason thus: before any man can have a scriptural hope of heaven, he must be certain that his sins are pardoned through the blood of Christ; he must be sure that the saviour intercedes for him; he must be sure that the promises of God are his: They are all yea and amen to them that are in Christ; but if a man does not know that he is in Christ Jesus, he cannot claim them as his. Now, how can any man on earth be sure that God has blotted out his sins, that Christ ever pleads for him, that the promises of God's word are his, unless the Spirit of God, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, reveals these things to his soul? Some say by inductive reasoning. It will not do. "He that leaneth to his own understanding is a fool." Our reason may be bewildered. Our reason cannot find out what is done in heaven. The Spirit of God can only reveal to us what is done there. Our reason, when guided by the Spirit of God, after we have received his witness to the fact of our adoption, may, by comparing our thoughts, motives, words, and actions with the word of God, find collateral proofs of our adoption, to save us from delusion; but it never can find these proofs without the Spirit's aid, who himself beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God. For ten thousand worlds we would not rest our hope of heaven on anything short of the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit to the fact that we are accepted of God through the beloved. Horne's work on the Spirit did us much harm in our youthful days, and through his reasonings we were led to reject the doctrine of the direct testimony of the Spirit to the believer's sonship: and for nearly two years we went on, making our moan, as Newton describes it:—

"'Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought;  
Do I love the Lord or no,  
Am I his, or am I not."

The misery we endured during that period, cannot be described better than in these lines:—

"From fear to hope, from hope to fear,  
My shipwreck'd soul is tossed;  
Till I am tempted to despair,—  
And give up all for lost."

After this mental anguish had continued for so long a period, we examined the word of God: and by diligently studying that word, especially the eighth of Romans, and the fourth of

Galatians, we were shut up to the faith, "That none are the sons of God who have not the Holy Spirit in their hearts, crying, Abba Father." Our own experience, and the conversations we have had with numbers, during the last twenty years, who deny or doubt the witness of the Spirit, leads us to state as our solemn conviction, that no man has, or can have, a rational, scriptural, certain hope of heaven, who does not enjoy the witness of the Spirit to the fact that he is a child of God. He may be a penitent; he may be a sincere seeker of salvation; he may desire above all things to go to heaven; he may, as Mr. Wesley has it, be a servant of God; and, as Clarke has it, sit at times some moments with Christ on a throne of love; and may possibly, but how we cannot tell, get to heaven at last; but he never can, unless he enjoys the witness of the Spirit, say with Paul, "We know that if this, the earthly house of our tabernacle, were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

*The hope of the believer has a quickening, saving influence.*  
 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath begotten us again unto a *lively hope*, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."—1 Peter i. 3—5. "We are saved by hope."—Rom. viii. 24. The hope of this inestimable inheritance is justly termed a *lively hope*, inasmuch as it imparts that energy of mind, which qualifies the believer to meet all the trials of life, all the persecutions of men, all the temptations of devils, and all the agonies of death with composure and joy. It is a lively hope, for it enables him, in the storm, as well as in the calm;—in the dark and cloudy day, as well as when the sun shineth in his strength;—through evil report, as well as good report, vigorously to pursue his course towards his incomparable inheritance. The hope of the believer saves him from all fear, all agitation, all despondency, all despair, and enables him to rejoice in the midst of those distresses which would overwhelm and wreck a man of the world. While cast upon the dark, tempestuous sea of human life, the hope of eternal glory is an anchor to the soul;—a sure and steadfast anchor. However rudely the winds may blow;—however horribly the tempest may rage;—however furiously the waves may roar, the Christian's little bark safely outrides the



storm, and gains the haven of eternal repose. The well grounded hope of heaven prepares the soul for every emergency. Should cares come upon us like a deluge—should sorrows fall upon us like a storm—should men despise and persecute us: should devils hurl at us their fiery darts, the "God of hope" is our defence; and in the midst of all, he will "fill us with peace and joy through believing, and cause us to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost." Should pestilence sweep through a country, and, with the rapidity of a whirlwind, carry thousands to a premature grave; still, the hope of heaven ensures our safety. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee. . . . Because thou hast made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the most high, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up."—Psalm xci. 7, 9—11; And even allowing the believer does fall by the pestilence, for there are exceptions to every rule, yet, the angels carry him at once to "Abraham's bosom," and, though "absent from the body," he is "present with the Lord." Should God arise to make inquisition for blood, and terribly shake the nations of the earth with wars and rumours of wars; yet the God of hope will not forget those who trust in him; for his language to his people, in all such cases, is:—"Come my people, enter thou into thy chamber, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."—Isaiah xxvi. 20. Should Jehovah curse the earth with sterility—should famine, with her hollow eyes, shrivelled cheeks, and ghastly looks, stalk through the world, devouring every living thing, and eating up every living thing; yet the believer's hope would save him from despair, and would quicken his heart with joy and praise, amid the universal gloom. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."—Habakkuk iii. 17, 18. The hope of the glory of God changes completely the face of death, and dispels effectually the gloom of the grave. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."—

Psalm, xxiii. 4, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

*The hope of the believer is purifying in its effects.* "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure."—1 John iii. 2, 3. Those who are now the sons of God, are not yet fully acquainted with that exalted state of blissful perfection, which they hope to possess; but the earnest of it they do enjoy, and the hope of enjoying its full blessedness, after this mortal life shall terminate, causes them to use all proper means to retain that purity of heart, without which it cannot be enjoyed. Those who possess the hope of heaven, believe firmly that "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" that "There shall, in no wise, enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."—Revelations xxi. 27. Hence, having been cleansed from their idols and filthiness, by faith in the blood of the Lamb; their intellectual and moral powers having been renewed by the Holy Spirit, they strive to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The hope of heaven causes them to watch over their hearts, lest any evil thoughts should arise, lest any improper motives should be cherished, lest any impure feelings should be engendered; whereby guilt would be contracted, and pollutions caught, which would cause the Holy Spirit to depart, the Saviour to be wounded, and the Father to blot their names out of the book of life. This hope causes its possessors to keep at the utmost distance from every thing in the world that would have a tendency to produce the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. "Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," they dread it: and with the utmost vigilance watch against its alluring blandishments, lest they should a second time be "entangled therein, and overcome;" for then "the latter end would be worse with them than the beginning." This hope causes its possessors to obey the injunction, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."—1 Peter v. 8. Be-

Never are acquainted with Satan's accusations, temptations, and deceptions; and they know that, if they are not incessantly watchful, he will soon throw them again into "the horrible pit," and sink them deeper than ever in "the miry clay." Not only does this hope cause them to use all means to *retain*, but also to *increase* their purity. Their eyes are ever fixed upon Jesus Christ, the perfect model of holiness: the hope of seeing him as he is, and being like him in glory, causes them intensely to desire his beauty to be put upon them, that they may be like him in purity, while in this world. They are conscious, perhaps, of many spots, wrinkles, blemishes, which they do not behold in their glorious pattern, and they want these removed, lest they should, after all, not "Awake up in his likeness:" therefore, they study his word, believe his promises, daily approach him in prayer, that they may become increasingly like their blessed master. John says, "And *every man* that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he (Christ) is pure." This phraseology certainly intimates, if it does not plainly declare, that *every man* is destitute of the true hope of heaven, who is not using all the means placed at his command, for becoming pure, even as Christ is pure. Hope of worldly good will cause a man to respect his character and conform to the rules of society. Take the hope of the smile of the world from a man, and he cares not how degraded he becomes. And it is so in religion; let a man have a sincere and well grounded hope of eternal glory, and he will vigorously use all means to purify and fit himself for that exalted state; but take this hope away, and he will make no effort to resist the flesh, the world, and the devil, and feel no desire to become like Christ, in whom there is no sin.

*The hope of the believer will never be disappointed.* "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: *And hope maketh not ashamed*; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."—Rom. v. 3—5. Earthly objects of hope may fail; but the objects of the Christian's hope can never fail. The hope of the covetous, the sensual, and the ambitious, will be sure to end in despair, and cause them to make haste, to be confounded and eternally ashamed; for the illgotten and badly used wealth of the covetous, must be left behind when the soul enters eternity: the pleasures of the sensualist can only last for a season: the honours of the

ambitious are corruptible, and defiled, and will assuredly fade away: but the objects of the Christian's hope are not affected by the changes of time, neither can they be destroyed by the death of the body: they are immutable in their nature, eternal in their duration. The expectation of the righteous shall not be cut off; therefore they shall never make haste, never be confounded, never be ashamed. The hope of the hypocrite shall perish; because, with all his profession and show, he has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost. How graphically does Bildad, the Shuhite, depict the utter destruction of the hypocrite's hope, in the eighth chapter of the book of Job: "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." Let the hypocrite in heart ponder seriously this solemn passage, and cry to God:—

"Create my soul anew,  
Else all my worship's vain;  
This wretched heart can ne'er be true,  
Unless 'tis formed again."

Of all the characters on earth, the religious hypocrite is most abhorred of God, and most despised by men. The doom of the hypocrite is eternal death. The hypocrite will be horribly confounded, and eternally ashamed, "When the Lord brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and makes manifest the counsels of the heart." His hope will end in the blackness of unutterable and endless despair. But the hope of the believer will never be disappointed; consequently, he will never be ashamed. He has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost; and, continuing to believe in Christ, the blessed Comforter will never leave nor forsake him, but will abide with him for ever, and guide him safely to the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The truly righteous, who remain so till death, are sure of heaven; for God, who cannot lie, positively declares, in his sacred word, that the wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

*The hope of the believer is a blessed hope. "Looking for*

that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."—Titus ii. 13. Nothing earthly affords such pleasure to the human mind, as the hope of heaven. This hope cheers the soul in the seasons of earthly sorrow, which cannot be escaped—imparts joy when every worldly pleasure is fled and gone, as well as when we are in the full tide of worldly prosperity. If the Christian has other joys, this is the chief of them all; and if he has no other, the pleasures of hope abundantly supply their lack. The sweetest exercise of the soul is the anticipation of future glory. The man that has a well grounded hope of heaven, has feasts of joy of which no unrenewed mind ever partakes. Indulging the hope of heaven, the Christian's soul is filled with indescribable pleasure. He has an antepast of his expected good, luxuriates upon heavenly food, and enjoys the earnest of his future delights. This hope of heaven silences every murmur, dispels every doubt, destroys every fear, and kindles in the breast a present heaven. The pleasures arising from the hope of heaven we powerfully feel, but cannot accurately describe. Our fellow creatures, who have no hope, have felt great pleasure in the hope of meeting, after years of absence, a beloved child, or a beloved friend. Their hearts have throbbed with delight, their eyes have beamed with pleasure, and their countenances have been overspread with joy, when they heard that their long absent child or friend was returning home. To such we would say that the hope of heaven produces pleasurable emotions, immeasurably superior to what you then experienced. When the Christian thinks of heaven, his home:—of God, his Father:—of Christ, his adorable Redeemer:—of the Holy Spirit, his Comforter:—of the blessed angels, his ministering spirits:—of the spirits of the just made perfect, his brethren:—of their happy residence and blissful employments; the hope of soon seeing these beings in all their glory, and sharing with them their home, their employments, their glories, and their bliss, makes them rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

"Thrice blessed, bliss-inspiring hope!  
It lifts the fainting spirits up;  
It brings to life the dead."

The hope of heaven, when fully possessed and rightly cherished, makes a man as happy as it is possible for mortal to be in this imperfect state. The possessor of this blessed hope has sorrows of an earthly nature to endure, as well as

other men : but in reference to his eternal state, he is at ease. He feels that all is well. He can therefore smile through his tears, rejoice in his sorrows, and glory in his tribulations ; because he has the full assurance that " Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. " Religious hope," says a good writer, " has this advantage over every other kind of hope, that it is able to revive the dying man, and to fill his mind not only with secret comfort and refreshment, but sometimes with rapture and transport. He triumphs in his agonies, while the soul springs forward with delight to the great object which she has always had in view, and leaves the body with an expectation of being reunited to her in a joyful and glorious resurrection." Another eminent writer observes " How eminently was this power of hope exemplified in the consolation and support, which the hope of a resurrection to eternal life afforded to the first Christians, when tormented and put to death by their cruel persecutors."

Such, then, is the hope which every christian possesses. All do not possess the same degree of this blessed hope ; but, still, all who are saved have the hope of the Gospel ; and it is both the duty and privilege of every believer to abound in hope. This grace may be vastly increased, and with its increase will be found an increase of consolation, support, and joy. " Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."—Rom. xv. 13.

II. The duty of the Christian to be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in him.

In Peter's day there was need for Christians to " be ready always to give an answer to every man that asked a reason of the hope that was in them." " More especially when their enemies were putting them to death. Because the heathen who heard them, on these occasions, declare their hope, perceiving that it was what supported them under their sufferings, and made them fearless in death, could not avoid being curious to know what the foundation of that hope was, whose influence was so powerful ; and because the declara-

tion of their hope at such a time might induce some of the heathens to embrace the gospel, who, with admiration beheld their courage in suffering and death."—McKnight.

*There is as much need in the present day for Christians being ever in readiness to give an answer of their hope of heaven, as there was in Peter's day; for thousands of our fellow creatures have no hope of heaven. The ungodly are living only for the present, criminally neglecting the future. Their minds are in darkness in reference to a future state of being, and they are completely indifferent as to what their destiny may be in eternity. These men can only be aroused from their fatal lethargy by the active exertions of Christians. It is our solemn and bounden duty to place before them, in a clear light, the future destiny of man; to strive to awaken them to consideration, feeling, and action on the subject of their eternal state; and then to place before their minds the blessed hope of heaven which we possess, so that they may be led intensely to desire the same well grounded hope. When this desire is excited in their minds, they will immediately want to know the nature, grounds, and influence of the believer's hope, and also the means by which it is to be obtained: and if we are not able to give them a clear and satisfactory answer to the questions they propose, we shall, in all probability, sink them in despair, and prevent them from seeking the salvation of their souls. Thousands may be eternally ruined through not receiving, in answer to their enquiries, a satisfactory reason of the hope which Christians cherish. Few men will be disposed to give up the gains of covetousness, the pleasures of sin, the applause of mortals, and choose affliction with the people of God, and esteem the reproof of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world, unless we can give them convincing reasons for so doing. Few men will seek, with all their hearts, the bliss of heaven, unless we can give them solid, scriptural proofs that heaven is worthy of their most earnest endeavours, and that by thus seeking it, they shall be put in possession of its inconceivable glories and its unfading joys. Hence the unspeakable importance of all Christians being ever ready to give a satisfactory answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them.*

*Our duty to be always ready with our reason of the hope that is in us, is evident from the fact, that every man has a deep interest in this matter, and has a right to an answer from us on this subject. We profess to have a scriptural hope of*



heaven; our unconverted fellow-men have it not; but still, heaven has been purchased by the Saviour's blood, for them as well as for us: they have a nature similar to ours, which the joys of heaven can only render completely happy: they are bound to us, and we to them, by the strongest ties: Christ has blessed us with the hope of heaven, that we may be made a blessing to the unconverted, by inducing them to come to Christ, to be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life: we have no right, therefore, to withhold from them any information which would have a tendency to lead them to the Saviour, to be made wise, holy, happy, and fit for heaven. It is a crime of no small magnitude to withhold bread from a famishing people; but how much greater the crime to withhold from our fellow-men that information which would save them from perishing eternally: and if we cannot, or will not, give them a reason of the hope that is in us, we are keeping them in a perishing condition. The eternal God requires us to be lights in the world, guides of the blind, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes; how then can we do his will unless we are ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us? To be unable, or unwilling, to give that reason on this momentous subject, which every man has a right to ask, we not only sin against man, but against God, who has given us the hope of heaven not merely for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of others.

*This duty receives additional importance from the consideration that many unconverted men cherish delusive hopes of heaven.* There are few unconverted men that do not indulge the hope of heaven; but they have no rational, scriptural, solid foundation for the hope they cherish. This was the case with the Jews in our Saviour's day. They thought they were sure of heaven because they were the children of Abraham and observed the ritual of Moses. They built their hope of heaven upon their ancestry and ceremonial purifications; they refused to place their hopes upon the rock Christ Jesus; therefore, Jesus said unto them, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold there are last, which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."—Luke xiii. 28—30. The

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gentiles who knew not God, placed their hope of heaven upon the ceremonies connected with their various systems of idolatry; which ceremonies only rendered them more and more unfit for heaven; more and more worthy of hell. In our day, in nominal Christian lands, where the Bible is found, hundreds, thousands, millions cherish a delusive hope of heaven. Some hope to get to heaven through baptism; some through attending to the forms of Christian worship; some on account of their fancied innocency; some because of their amiable instincts; some by reason of their great liberality; some on the ground of their reformation; and others because they think that all men must be saved either *with* or *without* holiness. This heart rending fact makes it tenfold more needful for the true Christian to be ready always to give a reason for the blessed, the sure and certain hope which he possesses. It is our duty to undeceive those of our fellow-men who place their hope of heaven on such sandy foundations, and show to them by evident and convincing reasons, drawn from the Bible, that, while their hope of heaven is unscriptural and unreasonable, our hope is in perfect accordance with both scripture and reason. We should ever stand ready to prove to them, from the scriptures, from the past history and present conduct of our race, the utter sinfulness of man, his complete unfitness for so holy a place as heaven, until pardoned and renewed, and the utter impotency of all human observances to cancel past guilt; of all human means to cleanse the soul from defilement; and of all human might and power to rescue the enslaved spirit from the powers of darkness. We should show them distinctly that Christ is our hope; and point them to him as the only foundation upon which any man can with safety place his hope of eternal life. We should make them feel that we do not rest our hope of heaven upon any thing except the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and upon our certain knowledge of a personal, saving interest in that sacrifice. Because men are so blind on this point, we should use the utmost exertions to open their eyes, and with gladness of heart proceed to give them an answer, when they ask a reason of the hope that is in us; for by so doing, we shall not only put to silence their ignorance, but we may induce them to build on the right foundation.

*It is our duty to give a reason of the hope that is in us, when we are asked to do so. In the discourse on "The intercourse of Christians with the ungodly," we have shown the folly of*

conversing with unconverted sinners about the deep things of God; but, still, when we are pointedly asked by them for a reason of the hope that is in us, then it becomes us to give them a plain and satisfactory answer. Some professors are continually obtruding their reasons upon sinners, and by so doing, excite all the hostility of their natures, and cause them to despise those who are so foolish. To reprove sinners, when they commit sin; to warn them of the evil and danger of sin; to remind them of death, judgment, and eternity; to beseech them to be reconciled to God; and to entreat them by the tender mercies of God to present their bodies and spirits a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable, which is their reasonable service, is our duty at all times; for these things they can understand; but to give them a reason of the hope that is in us, we must wait till we are asked, or until they are in a fit state of mind to receive a reason, and to profit by it. Our reasons of the hope that is in us, are pearls which must not needlessly be cast before swine:—are sacred things which must not unthinkingly be given to dogs, who will turn again and rend us. When men seriously ask for a reason of the hope that is in us, it is an evident proof that they are anxious about the salvation of their souls, and this being the case, it then becomes our bounden and imperative duty to lay open to them our own hearts; to show them what our hope is, where it is placed, and how we came into the possession of it: and if we do this wisely, feelingly, believingly, and prayerfully, we have every reason to expect that we shall be successful in bringing them to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

*To be ready always to give a proper reason of the hope that is in us, we must live in daily communion with God.* He is the God of hope; and causes us to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost, when we live in close and constant communion with him. Our earnest prayers should daily ascend to the throne of grace in the name of Jesus, for an increase of hope; for as our hope increases, we shall be able to speak of it to others with more readiness, more clearness, more confidence, and more power. The very reason why many cannot give an answer, when asked for a reason of their hope, is because they live at such a distance from God, and are in such a low state of grace that it is often a matter of doubt and perplexity with them, whether or not they have any scriptural hope of heaven: hence they are at a loss for an answer, when asked for a reason of their

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hope of heaven. We urge all who profess the religion of Jesus, to live near to God—to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then they will be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them.

*To be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in us, we must frequently examine the grounds of our hope.* For want of frequent examination of the grounds of our hope, our own views of the reason of the hope we possess are confused, indistinct, and, therefore, in the very nature of things, it is impossible for us to give a clear, intelligible answer to any who ask us for a reason of the hope of heaven which we cherish. Did this matter only concern ourselves, we ought, for our own comfort, to know precisely on what foundation our hope is placed; but as others are concerned in the matter, as well as ourselves, we ought to be doubly anxious to have clear and consistent views of the grounds of our hope of heaven. In examining the grounds of our hope, we should ever seek divine illumination, and ever be guided by the Holy Scriptures. It is not safe to depend on feeling. Our feelings may deceive us. We should bring our sentiments, our feelings, and our practices to the unerring standard of God's blessed word, and try them by this rule, praying the Holy Spirit to direct us, so that we may be preserved from error in this all important matter. Search the scriptures daily, with earnest prayer to God to open your eyes that you may see wondrous things in His law, and this will have a mighty influence upon your hope, and increase your ability to convey the reason of it to others with additional clearness and accumulated force. Men may call your feelings, if you speak of them, enthusiasm, fanaticism; but they cannot so well do this when you are able to show them that your views, feelings, principles, and practices are in perfect harmony with the word of God. They will then have their ignorance silenced, and will be forced to confess that you have good reason for cherishing the hope of heaven.

*It is our duty to be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in us, to every man that asketh, that God may be glorified, and that the person that asks a reason may be left without excuse.* The divine glory is manifested by us when we are able to give a proper reason for the hope that is in us; inasmuch as we exhibit Jehovah's infinite justice, truth, power and goodness, when we convince any man that God has given us "Good hope through grace." Moreover, some

will be induced to glorify God by giving him their hearts, when they plainly discover what great things he has done for us. And whether those who ask a reason, glorify God or not, we shall be clear of their blood, and leave them without excuse, when we have, intelligently, feelingly, and faithfully, given them a reason of the hope that is in us. They cannot then say "No man careth for our souls:" they cannot charge us with not having done our duty; and this, to us, will be no small consolation both in time and in eternity. In giving an answer to the questions asked respecting our hope of heaven, our object should be not merely nor mainly to vindicate ourselves from charges of fanaticism; but to glorify God and benefit our fellow-men. We should ever remember that a solid, scriptural reason of the hope that is in us, will have a tendency to clear the minds of men of those mists of ignorance which hide religion from their view, and which cause them to live contented without Christ and without hope: which cause them to live continually at enmity with the blessed God. Could the unconverted only see the blessedness of that hope which God has given to you, and which he is both able and willing to impart to them, they would be ashamed of their enmity to God, they would be moved by fear of his just and fearful displeasure, to fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them in the gospel. They would give glory to God by confessing their sins, supplicating his mercy, and embracing his Son as their Saviour,—their hope. These considerations are sufficient, if rightly weighed, to induce all Christians to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them.

*In giving a reason of the hope that is in us, it cannot be expected that every Christian will be able to silence all the cavils of unreasonable and wicked men.* An illiterate Christian may not be skilled in argumentation; may not be able to expose the fallacies of those children of the devil, who having learning and wit, take an infernal pleasure in raising doubts, and fears, and perplexities in the minds of honest and pious, but unlettered saints; and who strive to extinguish their hope and plunge them in the vortex of despair. Listen not, ye humble followers of Jesus, to the sophistries of these men. You are not required to answer their objections; all that you are required to do is to give a sensible and scriptural reason of the hope you possess. And if you live near to God, diligently study the scriptures, frequently examine the

grounds of your hope, and aim at God's glory and man's benefit, you will be able to speak of your hope in that sincere, lively, sensible, earnest manner that you need not be ashamed of before kings; and which will probably convince the gainsayer that your hope is no fiction, but a glorious reality, and induce him in his sober thoughts and in his hours of retirement to acknowledge that there is a divine reality in religion, and to wish that he had such a hope as you possess. The remark of an illiterate Christian on religion, has often confounded the mighty, when the volumes of learned Christians have failed in convincing the sceptic of its value and reasonableness. "Collins, the freethinker, or deist, met a plain countryman going to church. He asked him where he was going. 'To church, Sir.' 'What to do there?' 'To worship God.' 'Pray, whether is your God a great or a little God?' 'He is both, Sir.' 'How can he be both?' 'He is so great, Sir, that the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; and so little that he can dwell in my heart.' Collins declared, that this simple answer from the countryman had more effect on his mind, than all the volumes which learned doctors had written against him." Let the Christian, whether learned or illiterate, do his duty, and give his own reason in his own way, for the hope he possesses, and never fear but good will result therefrom.

Consider,

III. The manner in which the Christian should answer the questions respecting his hope. "With meekness and fear."

The manner in which a thing is done, or an answer given, is of the utmost importance. And in nothing ought we to be so careful, as *in our manner*, when conversing with the unconverted on the subject of our hope of heaven.

*If we are to be successful in our attempts to save souls, we must give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us "with meekness."* *Ἥπαιτης*, occurs three times in the New Testament, and is translated by Robinson, meekness, mildness, forbearance. In James i. 21. it is written, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word." The word of God cannot do us any good, if we receive it with a morose, turbulent, hardened heart. Nor will our answers to the questions asked respecting our hope, do any good to those who ask them, if given in a surly, boisterous, unfeeling manner. Because we are fully convinced that we



have reason and scripture on our side, for indulging the hope of heaven, we are not, therefore, to answer the enquiries of men on this subject with proud disdain and lofty contempt; but in the spirit of meekness. Some think themselves warranted to speak pertly and superciliously to those who may question the reasonableness of their hope; but such conduct is utterly repugnant both to the letter and spirit of Christianity, and every intelligent Christian must repudiate such a course. On this important subject, the apostle James says, "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge, among you? let him show out of a good conversation, his works, with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying, and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."—James iii. 13, 18. In other parts of God's word, we are told that, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves." Of our blessed Redeemer it was predicted, "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the gentiles trust." It is utterly inconsistent, therefore, for us who profess to be wise men—the servants of the Lord—the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, to give haughty, turbulent, insulting answers to those who question us concerning our hope of heaven. Besides, to say nothing of the glaring inconsistency of such a course, what effect will such conduct produce upon the minds of the unconverted? Will it lead them to admire religion, to desire it, to seek it, when they see that you, who profess it, have such an unamiable spirit? Certainly not; but instead of this, it will frighten them from religion, and cause them to regard it with feelings of disgust. Many who propose questions concerning our hope, may be exceedingly insulting and irritating, still we must with all mildness, gentleness, and forbearance answer them. Meekness in our answers will have a tendency to subdue their haughtiness and turbulence, and change their contempt into

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admiration. Meekness in our answers will have a tendency to cause those, who hitherto, through pride, unbelief, and worldliness, have rejected the religion of Christ, to consider its claims, and to seek the blessed hope which it inspires. We most heartily recommend the following just sentiments from an eminent author, to the serious consideration of all Christians. They are worthy of being engraven on the fleshy table of every christian's heart. "Let the believer, by a holy life and a chaste conversation show, through meekness and gentleness, joined to his divine information, that he is a Christian indeed; his works and his spirit proving that God is in him of a truth; and that, from the fulness of a holy heart, his feet walk, his hands work, and his tongue speaks. We may learn from this that *genuine wisdom* is ever accompanied with *meekness* and *gentleness*. Those *proud, overbearing, and disdainful men*, who pass for *great scholars* and *eminent critics*, may have learning, but they have not wisdom. Their learning implies their correct knowledge of the *structure of language*, and of *composition in general*; but *wisdom* they have none, nor any *self-government*. They are like the blind man who carried a lantern in daylight to keep others from jostling him in the street. That *learning* is not only of *little worth*, but *despicable*, that does not teach a man to *govern his own spirit*, and to be humble in his conduct toward others. If ye be under the influence of an *unkind, fierce, and contemptuous* spirit, even while attempting or pretending to defend true religion, do *not boast* either of your *exertions* or *success* in silencing an adversary; ye have *no religion* and *no true wisdom*, and to profess either is to lie against the truth. Let all writers on what is called *polemic* (fighting, warring) *divinity*, lay this to heart. The pious Mr. Herbert gives excellent advice on this subject:—

"Be calm in arguing, for *fierceness* makes  
*Error a fault*, and truth discourtesy;  
 Why should I feel another man's mistakes  
 More than his *sickness* or his *poverty*?  
 In *love* I should; but anger is not love,  
 Nor *wisdom* neither; therefore g-e-n-t-l-y m-o-d-e-r."

Ye who profess Christianity may rest assured that unless you give your reasons for the hope that is in you, with meekness, you will not, cannot be successful in bringing souls to holiness and to heaven.

*If we are to be successful in saving souls, we must give our*

*answers with fear, as well as with meekness.* Divine things ought never to be spoken of in a light, trifling, irreverent manner. A serious spirit and a serious manner are absolutely needed in speaking upon serious subjects; and, therefore, it is not always well to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, at the time when it is asked; for if the man is not serious, or if we are in the company of the giddy and gay, who are only disposed to turn into ridicule what we may advance, we had better plainly but affectionately inform our interrogator that the present is not a fitting time to discuss so serious a matter.

This duty must be performed with fear—but not with terror. Fear here means reverence, respect, honour. With a deep reverence of God, with proper respect to the man with whom we converse, and honouring the truth, we should give our reasons of the hope that is in us. In giving an answer, *we should dread saying anything that would have a tendency to hide the truth, or be unbecoming the dignity and holiness of the Christian religion.* This dread will prevent us from saying anything about our hope that will not stand the test of the severest examination: will cause us with modesty to state the amazing change that has passed upon us: with holy joy to magnify the exceeding riches of God's grace in begetting us again to a lively hope: and with tender and deep solicitude to press those arguments upon the mind of the sinner, which will have a tendency to induce him never to rest until he finds Christ in him the hope of glory. A proper dread of lowering the religion of Jesus, and making it unattractive to sinners, is absolutely needed, if by giving them a reason of the hope that is in us, we wish to honour God and save souls.

*In giving a reason of the hope that is in us, we must especially dread the indulgence of any feeling, the manifestation of any temper, and the utterance of any word, contrary to love.* Some Christians are easily excited, and warmth of temper will soon be manifested, and harsh words will soon be uttered, if they have to do with unreasonable men, unless they are extremely cautious. Here is just ground for fear, hence we should dread a failure on these points, and lift up our hearts to God for assistance, and beg of him, in Jesus' name, to control our feelings and direct our tongues, that we may speak as it becometh the oracles of God, and with those gestures, tones, and looks that will carry conviction to the minds of those with whom we converse, that we really love them and desire above all things their present and eternal salvation.

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*In giving a reason of our hope, we should do it with a deep and reverential sense of our accountability to God.* We should never forget that God's eye is upon us, and that his ear is open to what we say, when we are giving an answer to those who have asked us a reason of the hope that is in us, and that he will shortly call us to account for the spirit we manifest and the words we utter. These considerations will cause us to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; will make us careful to do this in a proper spirit; and make us earnest in defence of the hope we possess. "The confidence that attends this hope makes the believer not fear men, to whom he answers, but God, for whom he answers, and whose interest is chief in those things of which he speaks. The soul that hath the deepest sense of spiritual things, and the truest knowledge of God, is most afraid to miscarry in speaking of him, most tender and wary how to acquit itself when engaged to speak of and for God."—Leighton.

*In order to give a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear, we must sanctify the Lord God in our hearts.* We must entertain scriptural, just, and exalted views of God's nature, character, and will. We must understand especially the plan of redemption through his beloved Son. We must regard him as the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. We must recognize the great fact that God has constituted the followers of his Son Jesus Christ the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and that he has made it their bounden duty to bring their fellow-sinners to the knowledge of the truth, that they may be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. We must firmly believe that if we seek the salvation of souls, in humble dependence on his aid, that he will succeed our efforts, and reward our work of faith and labour of love:—but that if we neglect to seek the salvation of souls, he will deprive us of the joys of holiness here, and the joys of heaven hereafter, and cast us into outer darkness. We must, in a word, adore, love, fear and serve God, with all our hearts, at all times and under all circumstances, and then we shall be ever ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear, to every serious and candid inquirer. Had we at all times a proper, heart-felt sense of God's power, justice, goodness, and faithfulness: had we an awful sense of the greatness of his wrath, which now abideth upon the ungodly, and which in eternity is poured out without mixture of

mercy: and did we in our inmost souls desire the whole earth to be filled with his glory, then the fear of the reproaches and revilings of men would never hinder us from declaring our hope of heaven; and the insults, provocations, and persecutions of men would never ruffle our tempers, nor cause us to speak to them of our hope with unkindness, or fierceness, or contempt. O! if the knowledge of God filled our understandings, if the grace of God perfectly controlled our wills, if the love of God filled our hearts, and if the fear of God completely possessed and governed our souls, then indeed we could not rest till "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Sanctify, ye saints, the Lord God in your hearts, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. You possess the glorious hope of eternal bliss, your unconverted fellow-men possess it not. Go, then, in the fear of God, and awaken them to a sense of their lost condition. Remember they are destitute of hope; but still they are not yet cast into hell, where hope never comes. They may be brought to the possession of the hope of heaven, if you are faithful to your trust. Be ready, then, at all times to give an answer to every one of them that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. Let there be no hesitation, no reluctance, no unwillingness to perform this duty. The glory of God, the satisfaction of Christ, the honour of religion, and the salvation of souls depend on its right discharge. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."—Matt. x. 28.

## DISCOURSE IX.

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### THE NEED OF JUDICIOUS REPROOF IN SAVING SOULS.

"But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them."—PROVERBS xxiv. 25.

The proverbs of Solomon are excellent. They are like apples of gold, in pictures of silver: beautiful, valuable, useful. They are simple; but pregnant with meaning. Natural and pithy; therefore, easily applied to practical purposes. The text is part of one of his proverbs, the meaning of which will be readily perceived by reading the context: "He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him. But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them." Here the wise man forcibly points out the misery which shall come upon those who flatter the wicked, by calling them righteous; and the bliss which those shall enjoy who rebuke the wicked for their wickedness. The former the people will curse, because he is their enemy; for, by his conduct, he encourages the wicked in their sinful course, and thus augments human misery. Nations shall abhor him, because he robs the nations of true greatness, and brings a reproach upon them. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them, because they are doing what they can to stop the progress of iniquity, and to increase the prosperity and happiness of man.

There is, probably, no duty that Christians perform so carelessly, in fact, which they so entirely neglect, as that of reproving sinners; yet there is no duty more important, nor one that requires more attention, skill, and faithfulness in its performance.

To this duty, and the blessedness connected with its right discharge, we shall now direct your attention; hoping, under God's blessing, to be successful in stirring you up to pay that attention to it which its importance demands, in order that you may obtain the delight and blessing spoken of in this

passage. "But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them."

Let us consider,

I. The duty of Christians to rebuke sinners.

II. The delight experienced, and the blessing received by those who attend to it aright.

I. The duty of Christians to rebuke sinners.

THAT THIS IS THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS, IS EVIDENT FROM THE SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH. The scriptures speak of those, who perform this duty aright, in strains of the highest commendation. Solomon says, "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold; so is a wise reprove upon an obedient ear." David says, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." Therefore, if we regard only the moral excellency of judicious reproof, we are warranted in stating, that the scriptures require all Christians to perform this duty; for Christians profess to seek "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report;" and certainly the above cited passages prove that judicious reproof is excellent and of good report.

In the scriptures, however, we have plain and positive commands for the performance of this duty. In the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, God says, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Such is the positive law of God, which is binding upon us all. In the seventeenth chapter of Luke, Jesus Christ says to his disciples, "Take heed to yourselves, if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." In the fifth chapter of Ephesians, we are commanded to "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." And in the fifth chapter of the first of Timothy, that young minister is commanded to attend to this duty, in these words, "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear." These commands still possess all their force, and are binding upon all Christian ministers, and all Christian people, in the present day.

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There is a passage in the proverbs of Solomon, which, at first sight, appears at variance with those already cited. It is this: "He that reproveth a scorner, getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; rebuke a wise man and he will love thee." This passage is not, in reality, at variance with those already quoted. Those point out the duty; this confines us in the discharge of the duty to those characters who are not so far hardened, by the deceitfulness of sin, as to scorn reproof. It must be confessed, that some men have gone so far in crime, their consciences are so seared, and they are so fool-hardy, we might as well beat the air, or plough on a rock, as to think of doing them good by reproofing them. For "fools mock at sin," and pour ridicule and contempt upon those that reprove them. "A reproof entereth more into a wise man, than a hundred stripes into a fool." It is our duty to reprove sin in all cases, unless we are fully convinced that reproof would do more harm than good.

THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY IS NECESSARY TO SAVE SOULS. When David had committed the grossest sins which it is possible for mortal to commit, he remained utterly unconcerned about his state before God. For nearly twelve months there were no signs of contrition about David, and there was no return to God from whom he had so deeply revolted. All went on peaceably; and David would, in all probability, have been lost for ever, if God had not sent Nathan the prophet to reprove him, and set his sins in order before his eyes. Nathan, by an ingenious parable, prepared the way for that salutary reproof, which restored David to himself and to his God. David was brought, by this parable, to pass the extreme sentence of the law, which was death, upon the man who had done the wickedness which Nathan had narrated; and then, the faithful prophet, with firm voice, steady look, and unflinching purpose, announced to David, "Thou art the man. . . . Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." This faithful reproof humbled David in the dust, and led him, with weeping and supplication, hither to God, at whose feet, on this occasion, he poured forth the fifty-first Psalm, which will ever be regarded, while the world stands, as the penitent's manual of instruction and devotion. This reproof was the means of the salvation of David's soul.



When your preacher was stationed in Montreal, some years ago, there was a pious hussar, who belonged to our society, who was often annoyed by the horrid oaths of one of his comrades, W—— J——. This man was the most notorious swearer in the regiment; even the wicked soldiers turned pale at his blasphemies. One day, as he was making the barrack-room ring with his curses, the pious soldier exclaimed, "Go on, J——n, your judgement lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not: they will soon overtake you." This wise and faithful reproof had the desired effect. It pierced the dark soul of J——n, and filled him with indelible horror. Wherever he went, he told us afterwards, he heard the voice of his reprover crying, "Your judgment lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not: they will soon overtake you." The man was brought to our house in the greatest agony of soul; and through being directed to "The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," he found peace; and as long as he remained in the country, he was a humble and consistent Christian, fearing an oath, and walking in the ordinances and commandments of God blameless. If this reproof had not been given, in all probability, W—— J—— would be in darkness and death, even at this hour. Under God that reproof saved his soul.

"When the Rev. Henry Martyn was at college, he was called to visit a family in great distress, on account of the expected death of the husband and father. Some of the family, lest the agony of their grief should add to the distress of the dying man, had removed to another house, where Martyn found a gownsman reading a play to them, with a view to their consolation. He very properly rebuked him, with some severity, for this great impropriety, and was lead to fear, from the manner in which his reproof was received, that some unpleasant results might follow. But mark the goodness of God in blessing the means employed for the advancement of his glory. When this gownsman again saw Martyn, it was to thank him for his faithful admonition, which proved the means of a saving change of heart; and these two holy men laboured together in India in extending the knowledge of the Lord Jesus."

"The Rev. W. Romaine was one evening invited to a friend's house to tea; and, after the tea-things were removed, the lady of the house asked him to play at cards, to which he made no objection. The cards were produced, and when all were ready to commence play, the venerable minister said,

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'Let us ask the blessing of God.' 'Ask the blessing of God!' said the lady, in great surprise; 'I never heard of such a thing to a game of cards.' Mr. Romaine then inquired, 'Ought we to engage in any thing on which we cannot ask his blessing?' This gentle reproof put an end to the card-playing. This good man was once addressed by a lady, who expressed the great pleasure she had enjoyed under his preaching, and added, that she could comply with his requirements, with the exception of one thing. 'And what is that, madam?' asked Mr. R. 'Cards, sir,' 'Then, madam, they are your god, and they must save you.' This pointed admonition led to serious reflection, and finally to the abandonment of such unworthy pleasures."

The above facts are sufficient to prove that the performance of this duty is necessary to save souls. Most of those who are saved, are saved by a kind reproof they have received from some one, who felt deeply for their souls, rebuked them for their sins, and urged them to repentance. You may be agents in saving your fellow-men if you reprove them and pray for them aright. Numberless instances there are, where single reproofs have been the arrows which have stuck fast in the hearts of the king's enemies, and would not let them rest until they came, weary and heavy laden, to Christ, and received, through faith in his blood, rest for their souls. In the cases cited above, for your instruction and admonition, a single reproof saved the transgressors. Will you, then, refuse to reprove sinners, when a single reproof, with God's blessing, may save their souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins?

THE MOTIVES WHICH URGE CHRISTIANS TO REBUKE SINNERS ARE PARAMOUNT AND UNIVERSAL.

*Patriotism requires our attention to this duty.* The beneficial effects of judicious reproof upon a country may be easily seen. Every man possesses some influence among his fellow-countrymen; and observation, as well as scripture, proves, that "One sinner destroyeth much good;" that "By reason of sin and swearing, the land mourneth;" that "Sin is a reproach," and a grievous curse "to any people." Therefore, when a sinner, by judicious reproof, is brought to "Cease to do evil, and learn to do well:" is induced to give up swearing and all manner of sin; and to lead a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty, the country in which he dwells must be benefitted. Society at large will

have the benefit of his godly conversation, his effectual prayers, his holy example; and as before his conversion he destroyed much good: so after his conversion he will destroy much evil. He will be a blessing to his family, his neighbours, and his country. To talk of patriotism, while you will not reprove sin, which has a mighty tendency to corrupt the morals of a community, to disturb the peace of your country, and to introduce disorder and ruin into the commonwealth, is vain. You may talk as much as you please: it is nothing but talk. The words you utter are vain, empty words, which mean nothing. No man is a lover of his country who will not resist and reprove sin, which has ruined the mightiest empires of antiquity, and which is threatening many modern nations with destruction. The people have a right to curse; and the nations but too much cause to abhor the man who "Saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous," or who refuses to rebuke the sinner for his wickedness.

*Philanthropy requires our immediate attention to this duty.* Sin is the prolific source of all the miseries endured by our race. If idolatry, profane and vain swearing, sabbath breaking, disobedience to parents, murder, lewdness, theft, false witnessing, and covetousness were destroyed; and all men loved the Lord their God, with all their hearts, souls, mind, and strength, and their neighbours as themselves, this would be a happy world. The spiritual woes endured by our race would be entirely removed; and the physical evils, which flesh is heir to, would be lessened in their number, and mitigated in their severity. When men sin, they injure both themselves and their fellow-creatures; and, therefore, if we love them, we shall reprove them for their sins. If sin goes unreprieved, it will overthrow the order, and destroy the happiness of the world. It has already done these to an alarming extent; and if some did not resist and reprove sin, the world would soon be completely ruined. Silence gives consent to the crimes perpetrated among men: virtually sanctions all that the wicked do, which causes misery to come in upon our race like a flood; therefore, genuine philanthropy will induce its possessor to reprove sin, wherever and whenever he finds it. No man loves his order and his kind, as he ought, who suffers sin to go unreprieved. A good writer observes: "Suppose we see our neighbour exposed to a temporal calamity, say his house on fire. True love will induce us to warn him, and not to leave him to perish in the flames: especially if we saw him inclined to persist in his course, and

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stay in his burning house, we should expostulate earnestly with him, and not suffer him to destroy himself, if we could possibly prevent it. Much more should we warn him of the consequences of sin, and reprove him, and strive to turn him, before he destroys himself." How little genuine philanthropy is there in the world! How few understand its nature and object! We hear much of the love of mankind from *many*; but *few* love their race in deed and of a truth. They say, indeed, "Be ye warmed, and clothed, and filled;" but, alas! they do not steadily oppose, nor constantly reprove the sins of men, which are the cause of all the miseries our fellows endure. We may call ourselves philanthropists as long as we choose; and we may warm, and clothe, and feed the bodies of men, to the utmost of our ability; but if we do not oppose their sins, reprove their sins, and strive to induce them to give up their sins, we love them not; and are guilty of the inconsistency, the folly, and the wickedness of the old Jewish scribes and pharisees, of whom Jesus said, "Ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone." —Matth. xxiii. 24.

*The preservation of ourselves and families require special attention to this duty.* Sin is infectious. Both we and our families are in danger of being led away, by the error of the wicked, from our steadfastness. We know the evil of sin by bitter experience. We have not forgotten the fearful apprehensions which we experienced when our eyes were opened by the Spirit, and we had a clear and full view of the malignant nature of sin, and its destroying effects. Then we perceived, that by sin, we had grievously offended the *blessed God*, wantonly crucified the *Son of God*, wilfully grieved the *Spirit of God*, and exposed ourselves to the *vengeance of Almighty and eternal wrath*. We, therefore, have just reason both to dread and reprove sin. If we cease to dread and reprove sin, we shall again be brought under its power and dominion: for we have a nature inclined to evil. Iniquity prevails on every hand; satanic influence is ever prompting and enticing us to work wickedness: consequently, if we do not cherish a dread of sin, and bear a solemn protest against sin, by reproofing it, we shall fall into condemnation, and be carried away by the wicked influences which surround us. It is only by cherishing a dread of sin, and bearing a continual protest against it, that we can escape this

dire evil. All experience and all history prove that the heart of man is apt to lose its keen sensibilities of wrong by frequently witnessing atrocious deeds. The inhabitants of Paris were so accustomed to horrid deeds of blood, during the reign of terror, that they could even rejoice, and sing, and dance, while their fellow-citizens were being guillotined by scores and hundreds. The soldier, who has often been in the battle-field, loses all sense of horror at the sight of the torn limbs, mangled bodies, and lifeless corpses of his comrades which strew the earth on every side of him. We have read accounts of Europeans who went to the West Indies, during the reign of slavery in the British Colonies, who were so horrified, that they actually fainted away, when they saw slaves stripped and flogged, till the blood and flesh flew at every stroke of the lash; but, by seeing these horrid exhibitions frequently, they lost all sense of their barbarity, and were, afterwards, found performing the same deeds, and taking their station among the foremost advocates for the continuance of the cursed system called Slavery. What wonder, therefore, will it be, if we lose the dread of sin and cease to reprove it, should we again be brought under its influence, and be found running with the multitude to do evil.

Our families are in great danger of being ruined for ever through the prevalence of ungodliness. Our wives, our children, our parents, our brothers and sisters, for whose spiritual and eternal welfare we are deeply solicitous, are in danger of being corrupted and eternally ruined by the sins of others. Iniquity abounds. Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners. This ought to alarm us, and cause us to reprove sin, wherever we find it, lest those who are dearer to us than life should, through hearing us, say nothing against it, think sin a trifle, and be led to live in its practice, and be ruined for ever. If our neighbour's house be on fire, we have just cause for alarm in reference to our own dwelling; and equally as great reason have we for alarm lest the wickedness of the wicked should corrupt and destroy our nearest and dearest relatives. If the plague, or the cholera, or any other contagious disease be among our neighbours and acquaintances, we should have just reason to fear, that without the greatest precaution, it would be communicated to our families; and equally as great reason have we to fear that our families will be infected by the still more dreadful contagion of sin. From the fire we may flee: from the plague we may hasten; but where, O! where can we flee from the presence

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of sin? In town and in village, in the city and in the wilderness; wherever human beings are congregated, iniquity is found, sin rages. What is to be done? what can be done? but to dread it ourselves; to infuse the horror of it into the minds of our relatives; to pray to God for preservation; and seriously, earnestly, and constantly rebuke the wicked for their wickedness. Let Christians neglect this duty, and the ruin, the eternal ruin, of themselves and house, of their relatives, will, in all probability, be the penalty of their folly and their wickedness.

*Religion imperiously demands our attention to this duty.*

As Christians, we profess to love God; to desire the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the rescue of immortal souls from eternal ruin. Our holy religion peremptorily requires us to seek the glory of God, the satisfaction of Christ, the salvation of men. Can these be gained unless we reprove sin? Impossible! absolutely impossible! If we love God with all our hearts, and really desire the whole earth to be filled with his glory, we must reprove sin, which is the *abominable thing* which God hates; and the *cursed thing* which prevents the world from being filled with his glory. If a child love his parents, he will reprove those who speak against them. The preacher this morning, when but a child, on once hearing a man speaking disrespectfully of his parents, with heaving breast, tearful eye, and agonized heart, resented the affront, and put a stop to the calumniator. Where, then, is our love to our heavenly Father, and our concern for his glory, if we will not do for him, what any loving child would risk his life to do for an earthly parent? If a man love his country, (its institutions, its laws, its government,) he will boldly reprove those who abuse and revile it. We once, at an inn where we stayed for the night when travelling, heard a tremendous crash in the adjoining room: we rushed into the apartment, and found two aged, respectable men fighting; and when we had assisted in separating the combatants, we enquired of one of them, whom we had induced to enter the parlour, why a man of his age and respectable appearance was found guilty of so wicked a thing as fighting with a fellow creature? He replied, "Sir, he reviled my country; and I would fight till I died before I would stand and hear my country vilified." Did we love God as that man loved his country, we should most certainly be ever found re-proving those who have the audacity to sin against him. It is treason against God not to reprove sin. The man who



knows of a treasonable plot against the commonwealth of the country in which he dwells, and does not disclose it, is regarded as an accessory, and is punished accordingly. So, when we refuse to reprove sin, which is direct rebellion against God, we become a partaker of the sin committed, and are justly considered by Jehovah as rebels ourselves.

How, we also ask, can Christ see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, if we will not reprove sin, which was the cause of his humiliation, sufferings, and death? Men who commit sin, do not see, do not feel that the sins which they commit, caused his hands, and feet, and side to be cruelly pierced; and that they now pierce his heart, and give him greater pain than ever the nails or the spear did. By reproofing them of sin, and showing them what a shame it is for them to practice sin, which caused the blessed Saviour to sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane, and to die on Calvary; and which cause him, now he has gone to heaven, grief which no mortal can conceive, will be sure to have an impression upon their minds; and will lead many, whom we reprove, to "look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness for him, even as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Never will Christ's triumphs extend as they ought, until the followers of Jesus, from a principle of love to the Saviour, and from an intense desire to bring men to love, adore, and serve him—kindly, firmly, boldly reprove sin wherever found. Religion too, requires us to love the ungodly, and seek their good. But do we love the sinner and seek his welfare when we suffer sin upon him. The religion of the Bible, which we profess, says, "*Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*"—Levit. xix. 17. Are the following sentiments of the Rev. G. C. Finney, in his sermon on the passage just cited, too strong? We conceive not. Ponder them seriously:—

"It is cruel to omit it" (reproof). "If you see your neighbour sin, and you pass by and neglect to reprove him, it is just as cruel as if you should see his house on fire, and pass by and not warn him of it. Why not? If he is in the house, and the house burns, he will lose his life. If he sins, and remains in sin, he will go to hell. Is it not cruel to let him go unwarned to hell? Some seem to consider it not cruel to let a neighbour go on in sin, till the wrath of God comes upon him to the uttermost. Their feelings are so tender that they cannot wound him, by telling him of his sin

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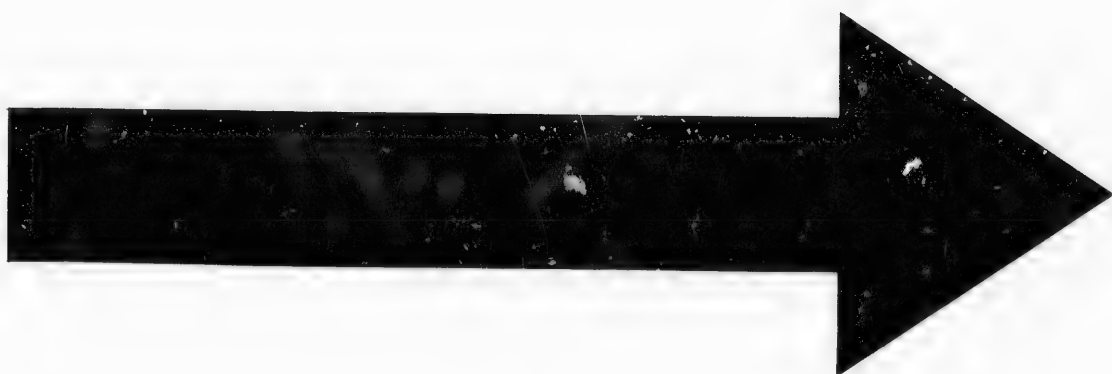
and danger. No doubt the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. Instead of warning their neighbour of the consequences of sin, they actually encourage him in it.

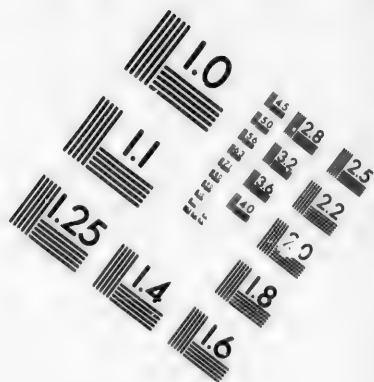
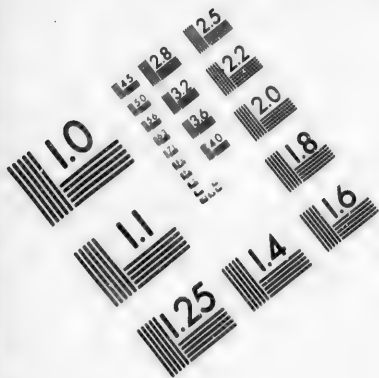
"If you do not reprove your neighbours for their sin, you are chargeable with their death. God holds us chargeable with the death of those whom we suffer to go on in sin without reproof; and it is right he should. If we see them sin, and make no opposition, and give no reproof, we consent to it, and countenance them in it. If you see a man preparing to kill his neighbour, and stand still, and do nothing to prevent it, you consent, and are justly chargeable as accessory; in the eye of God, and in the eye of law, you are justly chargeable with the same sin. So, if you see a man committing any iniquity, and do nothing to resist it, you are guilty with him. His blood will be upon his own head; but at whose hand will God require it? What says God respecting a watchman? 'Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.' This is true of all men. If you suffer a neighbour, who is within reach of your influence, to pass on in sin unwarned, he will die in his iniquity, but his blood shall be required at your hand."

THE MANNER IN WHICH REPROOF IS GIVEN, IS OF THE GREATEST MOMENT.

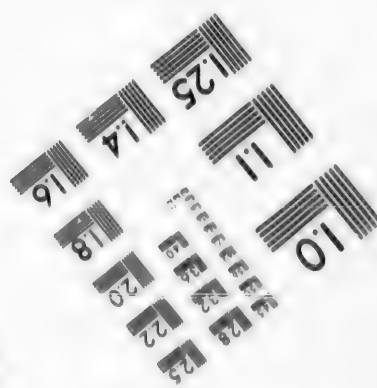
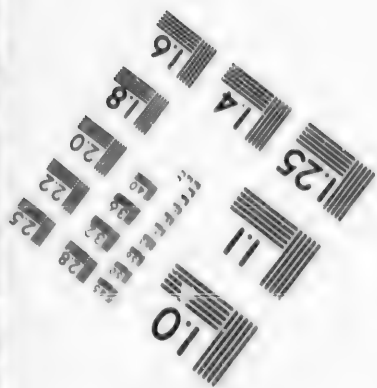
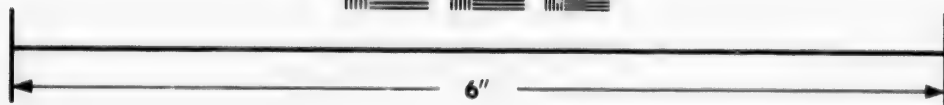
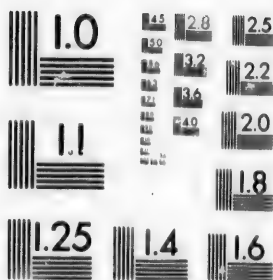
Some, by the manner in which they reprove others, do more harm than good.

*If reproof is to be successful, it must be administered judiciously.* Regard must be had to the temper and conduct of an individual. A bold, profligate, presumptuous sinner may need rebuking sharply. "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply."—Titus i. 12, 13. A young or a timid sinner may be easily affrighted and made to give glory to God; therefore should be, especially at first, rebuked gently. "And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."—Jude xxii. 23. Regard also





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must be had in administering reproof to times, places, and circumstances. When any one is inflamed with wine, or with passion, it is then a bad time to give reproof. We should wait till the fumes of wine have passed away, or till reason has again resumed dominion over passion, before we can expect reproof to produce compunction. When the person deserving reproof is in company, it is generally a wrong time and place to give it. He will be more likely to benefit by reproof when alone; for no man likes to be reproofed before his fellow-men.

The following instance is a striking illustration of this fact:—"The late Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, once passing the Frith of Forth, between Leith and Kinghorn, had for a fellow passenger a Highland nobleman. Mr. Brown observed, with grief, that he frequently took the name of God in vain; but suspecting, that to reprove him in the presence of the other passengers, might tend only to irritate him, he forebore saying any thing till he reached the opposite shore. After landing, Mr. B., observing the nobleman walking alone, stepped up to him, and said, "Sir, I was sorry to hear you swear, while on our passage. You know it is written, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.'" The nobleman, taking off his hat, and bowing to Mr. B., made the following reply: "Sir, I return you thanks for the reproof you have now given me, and shall endeavour to attend to it in future; but," added he, "had you have said this to me while in the boat, I believe I should have run you through with my sword." However, when the sinner is audacious and hardened, or where he is, especially, doing much mischief to others, it is then our duty to rebuke him sharply before all, that others also may fear. Take an example, "The late Rev. Mr. B. was once entertaining himself with seeing some of his parishoners catching salmon, when Colonel —, with several gentlemen, came near them. As the former, who was at that time a justice of the peace, was swearing in a very profane manner, Mr. B. thus addressed him: "Sir, you are a justice of the peace, and a gentleman of family and fortune, therefore your example to all should become the state in which kind Providence has placed you." He answered, "Sir, I will not come and swear in your church!" This was spoken with great bitterness. Mr. B. then left him; but the fishermen afterwards said, that the gentleman was very angry, and declared if the minister had not gone away he would have thrashed him. But his future conduct

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towards Mr. B. became the gentleman ; for, some time afterwards, Mr. B. having some business to transact with the justice, the latter at first sight thanked him for his reproof, but added, that he should not have given it in so public a manner. Mr. B. replied, "Sir, my reason for doing so was, because the fishermen who were present are my pashioners ; and as swearing is a prevailing vice with them, I am frequently under the necessity of reproving them. Therefore, sir, reflect but a moment, and you will see the propriety of what I did, and of the public manner in which I did it. Would not the fishermen have said, that the minister could reprove them, but that he was afraid to reprimand the justice, if they had not witnessed the contrary ?" The gentleman was well pleased with Mr. B's. remark, and ever afterwards treated him with kindness and respect."

We are perfectly aware that it is very difficult to lay down rules, in this respect, to meet all cases ; but we discover that much caution is necessary, and much judgment is required in reproving sinners. It behoves us, therefore, to seek from above large measures of that wisdom, which is profitable to direct ; and depend upon God, at all times, for that courage which is needed to enable us to perform this duty aright : then we shall not greatly err.

*Reproof, to be successful, must be administered faithfully.* If the Scriptures are to be our guide, faithfulness must characterize all our reproofs. The best of men, we there discover, reprov'd sinners in a very faithful manner. Isaiah reprov'd the Jews in the following faithful manner :—" Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save ; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear : But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity ; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness."—Chap. l. 1—3. Jeremiah, for his faithful reproofs, was cast into a loathsome dungeon. Peter reprov'd Simon Magus in these words :—" Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."—Acts viii. 20—23. Paul, filled with

the Holy Ghost, reprov'd Elymas the sorcerer, in the following terrific manner:—"O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord. And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

—Acts xiii. 10, 11. Our blessed Lord and Master reprov'd sinners in the most faithful manner: hear his language:—

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence, make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."—Matt. xxiii. 13—15. These examples clearly show that faithfulness characterized all the reproofs given by prophets, apostles, and our blessed Redeemer. They have left us an example that we should follow their steps. However judicious our reproofs are, they must be faithful, or we shall be condemned by the Lord our judge, who regardeth not persons, nor accepteth a reward.

*Reproof, to be successful, must be administered affectionately.* Want of affection will defeat our object. Men will not listen to our reproofs, if they are given in a wrong spirit; for this will convince them that we do not love them. Let us convince men that we love them; that our reproofs spring from deep concern for their present and eternal good, and our object is gained. They cannot resist the force of reproof, when accompanied with the sweet incense of love. To convince them that we love them, we must do so in reality. No polite phrases, no earnest protestations are needed to convince men that we love them: these are generally resorted to by the insincere. The eye must beam with love, the tones of the voice must express love, and the whole of our conduct must give unmistakeable proof that we love them not in word only, but in deed and of a truth. If we wish our reproofs to be effectual, the love of God must be shed abroad in our hearts: the constraining love of Christ, who wept while denouncing Israel's doom, and who, while reproving his disci-

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pleas for sleeping while he was sweating as it were drops of blood, uttered an excuse for their neglect, must impel us and guide us in reproving sinners. The more we have of the love of God, the better shall we be prepared to administer reproof in a becoming and an effective manner; for when divine love constrains us, we shall be sure to discharge this duty with affection. By reproving sinners, our object is not to pain them; but to save them from everlasting pains. This object can only be gained by love:—

“Love only can the conquest win,  
The strength of sin subdued.”

When unrenewed sinners plainly discover that we reprove them because we really love them, and are horrified at the thought of the eternal ruin which they are securing for themselves by their sins, our reproofs will enter their hearts, and cause them to forsake sin, which not only grieves us, but, if not forsaken, will pierce them through with many sorrows, and at last drown them in perdition. To induce us to perform this duty affectionately, surely the right remembrance, that we “were sometimes darkness,” that “we ourselves, also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another,” is sufficient. But, alas! we are all too apt to forget “the rock from whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit from which we were digged;” and hence being filled with spiritual pride, we are too ready to reprove sinners with a hard heart and cutting language, instead of reproving them in love. Let us never forget, in reproving sinners, what we once were, and this consideration will induce us to administer reproof in the best manner possible.

*In the discharge of this duty, perseverance is required.* We must not give up sinners as incorrigible, because they do not listen to our reproofs the first, second, or even twentieth time. We must not suppose a man is bad beyond correction, or depraved beyond amendment, by any means, so long as he treads this earth. While there is life, we may cherish hope of the sinner’s amendment, yea, of his regeneration; therefore we should persevere in reproving sinners, unless we are insolently forbidden, treated scornfully, and persecuted shamefully for our benevolent reproofs. In such cases we may cease to reprove by our tongues, but not by our lives, nor by our pens, nor yet by our looks. If we are in circumstances that we must not speak reproof, we may live it, write it, or

look it. A reproving look has, before now, saved souls. "And the Lord turned and *looked* upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."—Luke xxii. 61, 62. Persevere in the discharge of this duty, remembering that the sinner's soul is of more value than the world.

Consider,

II. The delight felt, and the blessing received, by those who discharge this duty aright.

"But to them that rebuke him, shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them."

*From the right discharge of this duty, every good man will derive internal satisfaction and joy.* It is stated in the Scriptures that "A good man shall be satisfied from himself," and in reference to those who give judicious reproof, this remark is strikingly correct. When good men conscientiously reprove sinners, the conviction of having performed their duty banishes all those unpleasant feelings which are connected with its performance, and imparts to their minds the highest satisfaction and joy. This satisfaction and joy they possess independently of the good that may result from the reproofs given. The delight spoken of in the text, is independent of the praise and censure of men. Whether others applaud or condemn, the men who properly reprove sin, have the satisfaction arising from the considerations that their motives were pure, their object good, and that their duty to God and their fellow-creatures required this much from them. Therefore, let others say what they please, they have consciences clear and void of offence toward God and man. Our text declares that with such shall be delight. They have springs of joy in themselves, while those who neglect this duty, have within them a constant source of uneasiness and sorrow. Those who neglect this duty have a wounded spirit which none can bear, while those who do reprove sin have a spirit of peace, and joy, and love. The men who reprove sin have nothing to regret, whatever they may have to suffer, for performing this duty. They can go to their God with confidence, for they have done what his word requires. They are prepared to meet the sinners at the judgment seat, whom they have reproofed, without fearing either the condemnation of their judge, or the reproaches and curses of sinners. They re-

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proved them, they warned them, they besought them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; therefore if they are found on the left hand of the judge, they cannot blame their faithful reprovers. These considerations afford unspeakable delight to all those who judiciously, faithfully, affectionately, perseveringly reprove sinners for their wickedness. But those who neglect this duty have not a conscience void of offence; they cannot go to the throne of grace with boldness, they are not prepared to meet sinners in the judgment, therefore are often filled with pain on these grounds. And let us remind all such that the delight spoken of in the text, they never will have, they never can have, until they conscientiously perform their duty in reproving sin.

*Our text goes still further, it positively declares that a good blessing shall come upon those who rebuke sinners.* They shall not only receive a blessing, but a good blessing. The meaning of which is that a complete, full blessing shall they receive who rebuke sinners.

*Those who reprove sinners, will receive a good blessing from the parties reprov'd, when they see their sins, and are turned from them.* A converted sinner always regards those as his best friends who reprov'd him for his wickedness, and turned his thoughts to God, and Christ, and heaven; not those who flattered and persuaded him to go on in sin; nor yet does he regard those as his friends who conniv'd at his sins, and held their peace when they ought to have reprov'd and warn'd him. When a sinner sees the evil nature and the ruinous effects of sin: when he obtains the forgiveness of sin through the blood of the Lamb, and has peace with God, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God, then his heartiest blessings will come upon those who reprov'd him of sin, faithfully pointed out the end of his wicked course, and who urg'd him to fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him. His prayers will ever ascend to the God of all grace for the present and eternal welfare of his reprov'd. The reasonings of the saved sinner's mind are, "I was living in sin and going down to the pit; but that good man stopp'd me in my wicked course, by reprov'ing me of my sins, and warning me of the danger to which they expos'd me; through his kindness I have been led to Jesus, and have found redemption in his blood; it is my bounden duty, therefore, to do that man all the good that lies in my power, and daily pray for his peace and prosperity." Those who rebuke

the wicked, will undoubtedly receive a good blessing from those sinners who are savingly benefitted by their reproofs.

*Those who reprove sinners will receive a good blessing from all the intelligent and pious.* While the people curse the men that flatter the wicked, and while nations abhor them; all the intelligent and pious will love, honour, and bless the men who faithfully reprove sinners. They will regard all such as true patriots, genuine philanthropists, and real Christians. The intelligent and pious know that sin has a demoralizing influence upon a country, deprives the human race of that happiness they might enjoy, and robs the blessed God of his glory, and therefore they do consider those men the lovers of their country, the benefactors of their race, and the servants of the most high God, who, by well-timed and faithful reproof, stop sinners in their career of madness and mischief, and turn them to holiness and God. And viewing them in this honorable light, their choicest blessings will come upon the reprovers of sin.

*Those who reprove sinners will receive a good blessing from the righteous Judge of all.* God will impart to them his blessing, which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and your labour of love." He will reward, both in time and in eternity the faithful reprovers of sin. He will reward such in the present world, by filling their hearts with peace and joy. Even in this world, they will enjoy the favour and protection, the the presence and love of the blessed God. They will be permitted to have "fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ." The Holy Spirit will witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, and they shall have the testimony that they please God. Those who honour God, by reproofing sin, God will honour. He will be their guide in perplexity, their light in darkness, their joy in sorrow, their present help in every time of trouble. In short, he will bless them with all the good they need on earth: for to the pious reprovers of sin may specially be addressed the consolatory language of Paul to the Phillippians:—"My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." God will also bestow upon the faithful reprovers of sin a good blessing in eternity, for he will raise them to dwell with him in glory for ever. The blessing he will then bestow upon the reprovers of sin is so good that human language cannot describe its value, and human hearts cannot conceive its greatness. It is a far more

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*exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* When the consistent reprovers of sin have finished bearing their solemn and earnest protest against the sins of their fellow-men, then God will address them in the following heart-cheering passage:—"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." What a blessing to enter into the joy of the Lord! Is not this a good blessing? Fulness of joy! pleasures for evermore! Eternity alone can fully reveal the goodness of the blessing which God will bestow upon the faithful reprovers of sin. Oh! if you love God, reprove sin, and never fear but the Lord God will be to you "A sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

*Before closing this important subject, allow us to remind you of the loss already sustained through neglecting to reprove sinners.* Through not attending to this duty, we have lost the *satisfaction and pleasure* connected with its right performance. Ah, how often has conscience smitten us, when we have seen sinners doing evil, and have not reproved them? How often have we retired from the houses of sinners to our own, followed by remorse and terror, when we have suffered them to go on in their wicked courses, without sounding an alarm in their ears? By neglecting this duty, we have lost the delight spoken of in our text; for our peace has been destroyed, and our souls filled with poignant grief. In addition to this, we have lost the good blessing of the intelligent and pious. When they have witnessed our backwardness in the performance of this duty, they have been forced to reprove us, and charge us with a want of that Christian courage which we ought ever to manifest in the cause of Christ. We have also lost the good blessing, and brought upon ourselves the sad reproaches of many sinners, who now see the error of their ways. It is true they are now enlightened and saved, but no thanks to us for their present happiness: they might have perished for what we have done for them. And we have incurred the displeasure of God by our cowardice and dereliction of duty. Many cry, My leanness, my leanness, through neglecting to reprove sin; they have lost many spiritual blessings through their indolence and cowardice, which God was waiting to impart.

But there is, we fear, a loss sustained, far greater than any of these, through our neglecting this duty, even an *irre-*

*recoverable loss.* The loss we have sustained may be retrieved by penitence, faith, and prayer. But how can those souls be now saved, who may have been lost through our neglecting to reprove them, warn them, and turn them to Christ? Dreadful thought! Agonizing reflection! Is it possible that immortal souls, for whom Christ died, are now damned for ever because we did not reprove them? It is possible. We have neglected to reprove sinners, many of them have died in their sins, and are now in hell: they might have been saved if we had done our duty. That soul, formerly of our acquaintance, that is now wrapped in flames of fire, might have been clothed in white robes: and that poor wretch that is calling for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue, might now have been drinking the living streams of bliss, in paradise: and that miserable being who is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing his teeth in unutterable anguish, might this moment have been ascribing "Salvation to God and the Lamb," had we faithfully performed our duty, and rebuked them, and not have suffered sin upon them. And who is to pay for this loss? Souls, it is possible, have been lost by our neglect. The end of Christ's cursed death has been frustrated by our means; and what shall happen to us, by whom our fellow-men perish eternally?

*How great is the guilt we have incurred by neglecting to reprove sin!* We have been guilty of slighting, disobeying a plain, positive command of God's law: and thereby we have sinned against our neighbour, sinned against our country, sinned against our kind, sinned against our own souls, and, above all, sinned against the ever blessed God! It is true the sin we have committed is one of omission: but we have yet to learn that the guilt of sins of omission is less than the guilt of sins of commission; nor are we aware that the punishment due to sins of omission, is less than that which is due to sins of commission. The following passage shows that sins of omission are sometimes greater in their enormity, and will receive a greater punishment, than sins of commission:—"And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of them they will ask the more."—Luke xii. 47, 48. We have known for years that it is our duty,

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as Christians, to reprove sinners. We have all of us, probably, neglected this duty; by this neglect, we may have ruined souls, have incurred guilt, and deserve punishment. And now what shall we do? We cannot undo the past. We cannot rescue the souls that may have already perished through our neglect. What can we do?

The loss others have sustained through our neglect cannot be repaired, but *our guilt may be forgiven, and our punishment may be averted.* For all our offences there is a sacrifice, and to plead our cause there is an advocate. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." —1 John ii. 1, 2. Let us go at once to the throne of grace, and put our cause into the hands of this all powerful advocate. Let us cast our guilty souls upon his propitiatory sacrifice. Let us penitently, freely, fully confess this heinous sin, which we have so frequently committed; let us deplore the sad consequences of it, and let us weep and make supplication, till our guilt is forgiven, and we are restored to the joy of God's salvation. And then God will, for Christ's sake, pardon our iniquity, though it is great.

Let us be careful in future not to come into the same condemnation. Let us "Add to our faith courage." *Courage, Christian courage* is what we need, to enable us to reprove sinners. Want of courage has been the cause of our failure in past days; we have had the desire to reprove sinners in days that are gone, but we have often lacked the courage; and hence sinners have gone unreprieved. Why! O why should we be afraid? Sinners have far more reason to be afraid of our reproofs, than we have to be afraid of giving them. Guilt makes all men cowards; and, depend upon it, however boisterous sinners may be, they actually dread our reproofs, more than the greatest coward among Christians dreads giving reproof. Take courage, ye men and women of God, and fear not the revilings of men, neither be ye afraid of their reproaches; but judiciously, faithfully, affectionately, and perseveringly reprove all who have the temerity to sin in your presence, and you shall have delight and a good blessing shall come upon you. Why should we be afraid? Has not God promised to give us a mouth and wisdom which our adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist? Has he not said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength shall be made perfect in thy weak.



ness? Is not his Spirit within us as the Spirit of knowledge, and counsel, and might? Does not God command us to reprove sinners? Do not sinners expect to be reprov'd by saints? Why then should we be afraid of giving reproof, or of performing this duty aright? Begone unbelief. Thou art the cause of our failure in this as well as in every other duty. Have faith in God, O my soul, and thou shalt tread down strength, and be able, with true Christian courage, to reprove all who dare to dishonour God, crucify Christ, and grieve the Holy Spirit, by the commission of sin. Have faith in God, Christian brethren, and the reprov'g of sinners shall become a pleasing and profitable duty to you, and the enemies of the cross shall submit themselves to your reproofs, and ye shall lead them with weeping and supplications to "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "Have faith in God" and faithfully reprove in his name, and you shall deprive Satan of his prey, and hell of her expectation, by plucking many a brand out of the fire, and quenching it in the waters of life. O "Fear not ye saints, quit you like men: be strong and of a good courage." And "one of you shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." May the Eternal Spirit, for Christ's sake, give unto all his people the harmlessness of the dove, the wisdom of the serpent, the courage of the lion, that they may, with gentleness, wisdom, and courage, so reprove sinners, that they may give up their sins, and give themselves to Christ, that they may be eternally saved. Amen.

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## DISCOURSE X

### THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO SEEK THE RESTORATION OF BACKSLIDERS.

"BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—Galatians vi. 1.

Christianity is a lovely system. When its duties are rightly understood, and faithfully performed, it must excite the admiration of every intelligent mind; and the love of every susceptible heart. The love of God shed abroad in the heart produces kindness, goodwill to all men. Christianity imperatively requires its professors to seek the present and eternal good of all; but especially to seek the welfare of those who are "the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." In this chapter we are addressed in these words, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, specially unto them who are of the household of faith." We are, as Christians, then, to do good to all men as we have opportunity. We are never to grow weary nor faint in well doing; and then, in due season, we shall reap a rich and an enduring reward.

Christianity requires the followers of Jesus to pay the utmost attention to those unhappy beings usually termed backsliders. We are not to treat them as the world treats apostates, with reproach, and scorn, and hatred: with sovereign contempt and cruel neglect. Ah, no! This is worldly wisdom; but it is not the wisdom which cometh from above. This is the religion of the world; but it is not the religion of the Bible. The world never forgives those who have betrayed its interests; who have apostatised from the views, the principles, and the practices which the world holds dear. They are doomed, poor wretches, to endure, as long as they breathe, the hatred of their ungodly fellow-men. What a contrast does Christianity present! Though a brother in Christ has fallen; though he has rebelled against God, betrayed Christ, grieved the Holy Spirit, damaged the cause of religion, made angels weep, caused wicked men and devils to rejoice and triumph, and filled our hearts with unspeakable anguish, yet

we must indulge no hatred toward that man ; we must heap upon his head no reproaches ; we must neither feel nor manifest any scorn, any contempt, any neglect ; but, with hearts full of pity and compassion, we must bend all our energies, and employ all our resources, to restore that fallen brother. How admirable is the religion of Jesus ! How infinitely superior to the world's spirit, and maxims, and customs, under similar circumstances, is the course prescribed in the words we have read for a text : "BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness ; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." This is Christianity. Let us consider,

I. The case supposed.

II. The duty enjoined.

III. The reason by which it is enforced.

I. The case supposed.

"If a man be overtaken in a fault." *A fault signifies an offence, a trespass against God.* The word particularly denotes apostacy from God. The best Greek Lexicographers inform us, that the word here rendered *fault*, signifies, "A fall from a state of favour with God." James calls the same thing, in the fifth chapter of his epistle, *erring from the truth* ; and speaks of the necessity of the man who thus errs, being converted from the error of his ways, that his soul may be saved from death, and a multitude of sins hid. In the text, the apostle shows, that the fault of which he speaks, is such a one, that there is need for the man who is overtaken by it to be restored to the favour of God and the forfeited privileges of the gospel. The word *fault* does not mean here some slight offence, some mere error of the judgment, or some unintentional mistake ; but it means sin—apostacy from God. John has a similar expression in his first epistle : "*If any man sin*, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

To be overtaken in a fault, "*signifies taken before one considers what he is going to do* ; consequently, the apostle is here speaking of those sins which men commit without previous deliberation, as is plain likewise from the reason subjoined, '*Lest even thou be tempted.*'"—McNight. But when a man falls into sin by surprise, this does not alter the fact that he has sinned : nor can it avert the punishment due to his sin, if he is not restored. When a man is surprised

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into sin, his sin is an evident proof that he has been guilty of neglecting the positive command of the Saviour: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matth. xxvi. 41.* If a soldier sleeps at his post, his punishment is death; because he ought to have been vigilant. And if a Christian neglects to watch and pray, he is surprised into sin; but he is justly exposed to the punishment which his sin deserves: for he ought to have been watchful when he knew that his adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, went about, seeking whom he might devour. "There is a great difference between a man who, being suddenly assailed, falls into sin, and the man who transgressed in consequence of having WALKED in the counsel of the UNGODLY, or STOOD in the way of SINNERS." Therefore, though we cannot apologise for the man's sin, nor acquit him of blame; yet, we ought to pity and restore him, instead of harshly condemning him, and driving him further into sin, and sinking him deeper into misery.

*The case supposed is a possible one.* It is possible for the members of any and every church to be surprised into sin—to be overtaken in a fault. Some of the best men that ever lived have been surprised into sin. They have neglected to watch and pray; and hence they have suddenly fallen into open and known sin; and some have even fallen into very flagrant sins.

Moses was surprised into sin, at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, when the children of Israel provoked him to that degree that he peevishly, thoughtlessly, and hastily said, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" This was done in a wrong spirit. "Though the people were rebels, and Moses called them so at other times, without offence, yet he evidently spoke at this time with an angry spirit. He also assumed the honour to himself and Aaron, instead of ascribing it to God: 'Must we fetch you water out of this rock?' He also seems not firmly to have believed that water would be given; and did not think it sufficient simply to speak to the rock as he was commanded, and therefore hastily smote it twice. Thus it appears, that they neither properly believed in God, nor did him honour in the sight of the people." Moses and Aaron had both to suffer punishment for their offence; hence we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."—*Num. xx. 12.* In the 108th Psalm, there

is a touching allusion to the sin and punishment of Moses in these words, "They angered God also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips."

David, the man after God's own heart, was overtaken in a dreadful sin. Through not thinking about what he was going to do, and neglecting to pray against the temptation which was so suddenly and powerfully presented to his mind, when he walked upon the roof of his house at eventide, he committed a grievous sin; that sin led to the commission of others, which brought death and misery in their train; and caused David the greatest sorrow of heart he ever experienced in his life. See the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the second Samuel, and the fifty-first Psalm. But this lesson did not prevent David from being overtaken again in a fault; for, we are told, in the first of Chronicles, twenty-first chapter, that "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." All that Joab could do and say did not prevent David from numbering the people. He committed the sin, and had to endure the punishment. Three years famine; or three months war and defeat; or three days pestilence are proposed to him. He may take his choice; but one of the three he must endure. He chooses the latter; and there fell seventy thousand men of Israel. What must have been the wretched feelings of his heart, when, covered with sackcloth, he fell on his face, and prayed to God in these words, "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued."—1 Chronicles xxi. 17.

Solomon was so pious, when he ascended the throne of Israel, that he prayed to God, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" This request of Solomon, arising from a spiritual judgment and a pious heart, was so acceptable to God, who searches, regards, and accepts the heart, that "God said to Solomon, Because this was in thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thy enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made

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thee king: Wisdom and knowledge are granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."—2 Chron. i. 10–12. This wise and pious monarch, it is lamentable to relate, fell from the favour of God, and was found both practising and encouraging idolatry; and we have no scripture to show that he was ever restored. Pious Nehemiah, when reproving the Jews for marrying strange wives, alludes to Solomon's fall—points out the cause which produced it, and the practical lesson which should be learned from so grievous an apostacy, in these words: "Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives."—Nehemiah xiii. 26, 27.

Peter loved his master; and undoubtedly he spoke the sincere sentiments of his heart, when he said, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both to prison, and to death." Yet Peter denied his master; for it is written, "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him them that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly."—Matth. xxvi. 69–75.

If these men were surprised into sin, through neglecting to watch and pray, certainly it is quite possible for believers, in the present day, to be surprised into sin: to be overtaken in a fault. These examples should teach us all the necessity of constant watchfulness and prayer, lest we should be tempted successfully; for, certain it is, that the most eminent meekness, piety, wisdom, and devotion, do not place any man beyond the reach of temptation—beyond the possibility of

falling. Are Christians in the present day meeker than Moses was, holier than David was, wiser than Solomon was, more devoted to Christ than Peter was? We think not. Then, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." It is possible, then, for a Christian to be overtaken in a fault.

*It is very probable that some will be surprised into sin.* Surrounded as we are by temptations to sin, having a nature inclined to evil, and exposed as we are to the accusations, the deceptions, and the enticements of the great adversary of God and man, who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," we need not doubt the probability of some being overtaken in a fault, of some being surprised into sin. Christians live in a world that is full of evil; where every thing has a tendency to draw them from Christ to the world, to sin, and to death. The allurements, the business, the smiles, the frowns of the world, are all inimical to godliness. Our condition in life has its peculiar trials and temptations. Rich men are tempted to pride, to frivolity, to sensual indulgence, to forgetfulness of God. Poor men are tempted to murmuring, to forgetfulness, to impatience; to speak hastily against God, and injuriously of their fellow-men. Those who move in the middle walks of human life, are in danger of being overcharged with the cares of this life. Amid the hurry and fatigue of business, they are in danger of neglecting their Bibles, their closet duties, their family devotions. Business concerns also have a tendency to harrass the mind, and deaden religious sensibilities; and when the spirit is jaded, then little anxiety is felt about the performance of spiritual duties. They are in danger, at times, of either performing them carelessly, or omitting them entirely; and thus, while attending to *things seen*, they are tempted to overlook things *not seen*. When you add to these the dangers arising from vain curiosity, and from the effects of satan and his angels, who are using, and will continue to use, every means likely to effect the ruin of believers, it is probable that some will be surprised into sin.

*It is quite certain that many, in the times in which we live, have been overtaken in faults.* Since we started in the Christian course, many have fallen on the right hand and on the left. We can call to mind many who once ran well, but something has hindered; many who were once found in the way of righteousness, but have turned aside from the holy commandment delivered unto them, and are now found wal-

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lowing in the mire of sin. Wherever we go, we meet with backsliders. In our own times we have seen some of the brightest ornaments of the church broken to fragments—some of the burning and shining lights quenched in darkness: their beauty has vanished, their light has gone out, their glory has departed! Since we commenced our voyage to heaven, we have seen many make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. They had nobly committed their bark to the deep; gallantly spread their sails to the breeze, which they thought would waft them to the port of glory; they bade fair for a successful voyage. But a gale arose; their hearts failed them; through despondency and terror, they neglected to cry unto the Lord in their distresses; and the result is easily told: they became a complete wreck. We have, since we commenced our ascent to heaven, beheld, with pleasure, many ascending the glorious ladder, which reaches from earth to heaven, rising higher and higher, while they kept their eyes fixed upon Jesus, who stands upon the top; but intense anxiety for their safety filled our hearts when we saw them looking down again to the earth. That look made them giddy; they took a false step; down they fell to the earth, and great was their fall; for, if not dead, they are so stunned, bruised, mangled, have so many bones broken, that their lives are despaired of. Perhaps some who hear us this day have to deplore, with the preacher, some sad fall from the favour of God in past days; but with him can rejoice in the restoration of God's salvation. Let us then remember, that what has happened, may happen again; therefore, let us not be high-minded, but fear: lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of us should come short of it.

*The case supposed in the text is most lamentable.* For a Christian to be surprised into sin, is one of the greatest evils that can come upon him, or upon the church, or upon the world. When a Christian is overtaken in a fault, he wounds his conscience, grieves the Holy Spirit, and loses the joy and peace he had obtained through believing. When a believer is surprised into sin, he loses his purity, again becomes filthy and abominable, and thereby forfeits his title to the purchased possession. By being overtaken in a fault, the child of God loses his strength; and, like Sampson, with his head shaved, he is taken by his spiritual foes, his eyes put out, his limbs bound with fetters of brass, and he is made to grind in the prison-house of the devil. When a Christian is overtaken in a fault, he is exposed to the "many stripes," "the sorer

punishment," "the greater damnation!" The deepest, the darkest, the hottest place in the bottomless pit is reserved for backsliders: because they are the greatest of all sinners. They "were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" yet, they have "trodden underfoot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing, and have done despite to the Spirit of grace." The heaviest punishment in eternity will be the portion of the apostate.

When a man is overtaken in a fault, the church is deeply injured. Christ, the head of the church, is wounded by one of his friends. The Holy Spirit, the source of light, and purity, and life in the church, is highly insulted and deeply grieved. The ministers and officers of the church are sent to weep between the porch and the altar; and have to mourn in secret over the unhappy conduct, and miserable state of their fellow-brethren. The members of the church are sorely pained, greatly discouraged, and much reproached, on account of the sad fall of him who once went with them to the house of God, and with whom they once took sweet counsel.

When a child of God is surprised into sin, the world is injured. The god of this world may rejoice, fallen-angels may hold their infernal feasts, the men of the world may triumph over the falls of saints; but the world is injured, deeply injured, by every backslider. Satan's kingdom is not injured, the cause of devils is not weakened, but strengthened, by this sad event; yet, the human race is deeply injured. Every fall of saints tends to keep unconverted men in darkness; to rivet the chains of bondage more firmly upon their souls; to keep them in guilt, impurity, and misery; to hurry them on faster down to the chambers of hell; and to render ineffectual all the means employed for their enlightenment, emancipation, happiness, and eternal salvation. The falls of believers are among the greatest barriers to the conversion of men, and are the greatest impediment to the free course and glorification of God's word. And, while backslidings are frequent, we cannot expect knowledge, righteousness, peace, and joy to fill the world.

*The case supposed in the text is not unavoidable: there is no need for any man to be overtaken in a fault. Some say it is impossible for them to stand; that they must fall*

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occasionally, if not daily. This is not true. A sufficiency of grace is treasured up in Christ to enable any man to stand in the Divine favour; and may be obtained by prayer. The only wise God our Saviour, is both able and willing to keep us from falling, and to present us *faultless* before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. The Holy Spirit is ever nigh us, and always ready, on application, to guide us, and to lift up a standard against the enemy, when he comes in upon us as a flood. The apostle Paul is confident, that he which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it unto the day of Christ. If we, therefore, are surprised into sin, it is our own fault. We may stand in the divine favour continually; for thousands have stood "fast in the liberty wherewith Christ made them free, and were no more entangled with the yoke of bondage." We have arduous duties to perform; so had they. We have great difficulties in our path; so had they. We have numerous, vigilant, cunning, malicious enemies to wrestle against; so had they. But, after all, they stood firm in the hour of trial; they were not overcome in the evil day; they came off more than conquerors, through faith in him that loved them, and gave himself for them. And, if they stood in the divine favour, and were not overtaken in faults, why may not we stand? We have the same promises to rely upon which they had; the same Saviour, to trust in, that they had; the same God, to preserve us from falling, that they had; the same blessed Spirit, to guide, strengthen, and defend us, that they had; and, therefore, if they stood, why may not we? If we are as watchful, as diligent, as prayerful, as believing, as devoted, as they were; we shall stand too, and never be surprised into sin: never fall from the grace in which we stand. Let us read, study, and pray over the following passage of God's blessed word: it may be of the utmost importance to us in preserving us from falling: "BY WHOM ALSO WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH INTO THIS GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND, AND REJOICE IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD."—Rom. v. 2.

## II. The duty enjoined.

"Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness."

*The backslider may be restored.* To restore a fallen brother is to bring him again to penitence for his sins, to trust again in the blood of Christ for forgiveness, to make him again the possessor of the joy of God's salvation, and of the

hope of the glory of God, and to bring him again to the enjoyment of church privileges, so soon as there is evidence of his being again a child of God. A backslider may be thus restored. Moses fell into sin, forfeited the favour of God, and, in consequence, was prevented from entering the earthly Canaan; but he was restored to God's favour, was permitted a sight of the promised land from Pisgah's top, actually entered into heaven, and is now before the throne of God. We have scriptural proof that Moses is in heaven, though he was once overtaken in a fault: for on the mount of transfiguration "Behold there appeared unto them, Moses and Elias talking with him."—Matt. xvii. 3. If Moses is not an inhabitant of heaven, he would not have appeared with Christ in his glory, and talked with him, on the mount of transfiguration. And we have every reason to believe that David was restored to the joy of God's salvation; was upheld by God's free Spirit; that he afterwards taught transgressors God's way; that sinners were converted through his agency; and that he is now tuning his harp and singing his psalms in loftier strains than those in which he sung when on earth, which afford *us, even now*, most precious consolation. And surely no man who reads the Bible can doubt of Peter's restoration. No sooner had he fallen, than he remembered the words of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly. It appears, from Mark's expression, that Peter was grieved, ever afterwards, on account of his fall, as long as he lived; for he says, "And when he thought thereon, he wept." All doubts upon Peter's restoration must vanish, when we read the conversation which Christ had with him after dinner, on one occasion, before Christ ascended to heaven. One portion of the narrative of that conversation reads thus:—"He saith unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."—John xxi. 17. And Peter did feed both the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock; for he became a most intrepid and successful preacher of righteousness, and wrote two epistles, which are feeding the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock to this very day. Many living witnesses can prove the truth of the assertion: the backslider may be restored. Your preacher would not now be engaged in the work of the ministry, if God had not recovered him by his grace, from a spiritual fall he had

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some twenty years ago, and if a kind friend had not reached out his hand to assist him in rising. The cases cited above show that those who have fallen from God, and committed the most heinous sins, may be restored. We cannot imagine greater crimes than those committed by Moses, David, and Peter. Moses robbed God of his glory, David committed adultery and murder; Peter, with oaths and curses, denied his master. Surely none that have named the name of Christ have been overtaken in greater faults than these. Then the vilest backslider may be restored. All Christians, perhaps, acknowledge that backsliders may be restored, but few really believe it; for if they did, they would seek their restoration.

*It is the duty of all Christians to seek the restoration of backsliders.* "BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual* restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness." We are too apt to leave this duty upon any one else, rather than perform it ourselves. It is the duty of every Christian to seek the restoration of a fallen saint, and the false sentiment, so generally acted upon, contained in the celebrated proverb "What is every one's business, is no one's business," will not justify us at the bar of God, for neglecting to restore the brother, or sister, that has been overtaken in a fault. The term BRETHREN includes all that are born again of the Spirit. It literally signifies those who are sons of the same parents; so that, spiritually, it must signify those who are born again of the same Spirit. It especially means those who are members of the same church; for Brethren is generally applied to the members of the same society or church, and Brothers, to the sons of the same parents. The term *Spiritual* signifies one that is spiritually minded, one endued with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. "Ye which are spiritual," who still retain the grace of the gospel, and have wisdom and experience in divine things, are here positively commanded by the Holy Ghost to restore the man that is overtaken in a fault. We should feel it to be our duty to lift up a brother after the flesh, if he had fallen into difficulties and sorrows. The love of a brother is very great. He is born for adversity. Many would part with their all of worldly good, to extricate a brother from temporal calamities. And are not those who are brethren to us, after the Spirit, as dear to us as are our brothers after the flesh? If they are not, we are destitute of the religion of Jesus, which saith:—"Beloved let us love one ano-

ther: for love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John iv. 7, 8, and iii. 14—16. If, then, it is our duty to love our brethren for Christ's sake, to the extent of laying down our lives for them, surely it is our duty to restore a brother that is overtaken in a fault. Were we to neglect to help, to the utmost of our ability, our own relatives when in distress, we should be execrated by the voice of the community at large. And Paul assures us that children and nephews, who profess Christianity, and will not provide for their mothers and aunts, who are widows and in distress, have "denied the faith, and are worse than infidels." What, then, are we to think of those Christians who will not endeavour to restore a fallen brother, who has lost more than life, and breath, and all temporal things, by losing "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost?" Think of them! We must think, if we think soberly, that they are lovers of their own selves, strangely forgetful of their duty, and are hurrying themselves to ruin as fast as they can. No Christian, who so wilfully neglects his duty to a fallen brother, can long stand in the divine favour. He has already lost his first love, is in a backsliding state, will soon become lukewarm: and, then, Christ will spew him out of his mouth as a nauseous thing, that excites the most unpleasant and loathsome sensations. This is a duty from which none of us must shrink, if we are to retain the favour of God, and save our own souls.

If the restoration of a fallen brother affected our temporal interests; if it were a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, by which we could gain a little more paltry gold, we should soon see our duty, and soon perform it: for, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found that

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which was lost. . . . Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found that which I had lost."—Luke xv. 4—8, and 8, 9. Now, do we blame a man for seeking his lost sheep, or a woman for searching diligently for her lost piece of silver? We do not. We should blame them for neglecting their duty to themselves and their families if they did not seek till they find their lost property, or until all hope of finding it is destroyed.

Listen, then, ye followers of Jesus. When a man is overtaken in a fault, one of your blessed Lord's sheep, for whom he suffered, bled, and died, has gone astray, and is in danger of being devoured by the roaring lion of hell. Is it the duty of none of you to seek that sheep, and restore it to the fold of Christ? Christ thinks more of that poor wanderer than he does of the cattle upon a thousand hills: and deeply as he has fallen, and far as he may have wandered, there would be more joy in heaven over his restoration than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance: Christ, in this text, commands every one of you to go and seek, and restore that wandering brother to the fold. And will you, can you, dare you say with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" If you do, he will brand you with Cain's mark, and you shall be known in heaven, on earth, in hell, as the men and the women who saw A BROTHER FALL, but would not lend a hand to assist him to rise:—A BROTHER PERISHING, but would not stretch out your arm to pluck the brand from the fire!

Brethren, when a man is overtaken in a fault, one of your Lord's jewels is stolen, by the great enemy of souls, who has already defaced its beauty, who is proceeding with infernal malice to break, crush, and destroy it; and if not speedily recovered from the hand of the hellish spoiler, it will be lost to Christ for ever. That jewel Christ prizes more, and it is intrinsically worth more, than all the gold and silver, pearls and rubies, diamonds and precious stones of every hue, of every degree of hardness and value, found in the material universe. That jewel he commands you, his servants, his followers, his friends, to go and rescue from the hand of the enemy, and bring it back to his cabinet, that he may find it in that day when he makes up his



jewels. And have none of you devotion, loyalty, and love enough to Jesus your master, nor courage and zeal enough in his cause, to attempt the recovery of that jewel? Then, be assured you forfeit his favour, and will be left prey to the spoiler, who has already nearly ruined your once brilliant and precious companion, whose restoration you will not attempt.

Were we as anxious to restore a poor wanderer to the fold of Christ, as men are to recover their lost property, we should not see many backsliders going entirely to the world, and becoming lost to themselves, to the church, and to Christ; but we should see most of them returning to the fold. If we had a proper sense of the deep interest that Christ, who died for them, feels in their restoration; if we had a deep sense of the infinite value of their souls; if we had a proper conception of our duty, both to Christ and to them, we should never rest till the brethren who have been surprised into sin are restored to the joy of God's salvation, brought back to the ways of righteousness, and once more made fellow citizens with the saints. Perhaps no class of sinners in the world have more reason to cry, "No man careth for my soul," than backsliders; yet, none more needs our help, and none are we commanded more positively to seek and to save. What can we say to our judge, if we neglect to restore our fallen brethren, when he shall call us to give an account, and when he shall ask us, as he did Cain, Where is thy brother? Ponder this question, ye that are spiritual, and go at once, and restore your fallen brother.

*To restore the man who has been overtaken in a fault, proper means must be employed.* They must not be overlooked and neglected, as though, by the employment of proper means, they cannot be restored. There are not many backsliders but what may be restored, if the right method is taken to restore them. To restore the backslider, we must go after him, and endeavour, by our conversation, to bring him back to the Saviour. In conversing with him, we must ascertain, if possible, the state of his mind, and then address him accordingly. If we find him humbled, penitent, brokenhearted, it would be cruelty to apply even the terrors of the Lord to his soul. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." A humbled backslider is truly a bruised reed, bordering on dissolution, and may be justly compared to the dim wick of a lamp just ready to expire for the want of oil: apply the terrors of the law in this case,

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and you will, in all probability, destroy the reed, and quench the lamp: but encourage such to return, by the declarations of mercy made to the penitent backslider, and you will prop the bruised reed and rekindle the smoking lamp, and Christ will send forth judgment unto victory. He will bless what you say, and that backslider will again flourish in the house of God, again shine as a light in the world. If, however, we find him obstinate, hardened, and indifferent we ought to arouse, if possible, his fears, by reminding him of the terrors of the Lord, and showing him that he will become a pillar of reproach and wrath, if he continues his wanderings: and we must endeavour to persuade him to turn to God, from whom he has so deeply revolted. Jude suggests both these methods of dealing with backsliders, in his short but valuable epistle. Hence he says:—"And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Those who have sinned through ignorance and surprise, we shall generally find penitent, and can only be restored by gentle persuasion. Those who have sinned through corruption of heart, or through pride of intellect, will want the fear of God's wrath produced in their hearts; and with them we must use prompt, vigorous, decided measures. Jude justly describes the means to be used, when he says:—"others save with fear, *pulling* them out of the fire." Yes, brethren, we say it with reverence, that some backsliders, if they are to be saved, will require a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together, before we can extricate them from the fire. And why should we not unite our efforts, to pull them out of the flames of sin? And in pulling them out of the fire we should take care, in our conversations, to say nothing that would give them the least reason to think that their sin is not very offensive both to God and us. Jude declares that we must hate, while we are saving the sinner, *i. e.* pulling him out of the fire, even the garment spotted by the flesh. We must shun all familiar intercourse with them, while in a backsliding state, and in no way sanction their sin. As we would shun touching a garment spotted by the flesh of one who hath a plague sore, so must we hate the sin of which they are guilty. Nathan used a very ingenious method to restore David. And some good men in modern times have been very successful in restoring their brethren who have fallen. In most cases the plan which a humble follower of Jesus, of the name of John Westwood, took to restore a

fallen brother, will prove successful. In one of our societies, in our native circuit, a very excellent brother was surprised into sin, and lapsed into infidelity. Many intelligent Christians tried to restore him, by reasoning with him; but they all failed. At length John Westwood thought he would try to restore him. When he called and made known his errand, the poor infidel laughed at him for his pains in calling, and said:—"Why, John, it is no use your coming to reason with me: I can overcome in argument all your parsons." John replied, "I am not come to reason with thee; but to ask thee, Art thou as happy now as thou wert when thou wert a Methodist." The man was confounded with this question, and with tears candidly confessed that he was not. "Then," said John, "let me pray with thee." And under John's prayer he was led to pray for himself, and rested not till his backslidings were healed. It is often the best way to bring to the remembrance of the backslider the joys departed, the blessedness they once spake of. This will often touch the inmost soul, and produce penitence when nothing else will.

We must especially try the efficacy of prayer, in endeavouring to restore them. We must pray for them, and, if possible, pray with them. James and John both direct us to pursue this course with a fallen brother. The apostle James says:—"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James v. 14—16. John says:—"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."—1 John v. 16, 17. The death referred to here is evidently, we think, temporal death. A man in a backsliding state may easily perform acts which will end in temporal death, and the believer that prays in the Holy Ghost cannot ask for his restoration to life and health. Still, he can, and must pray to the Lord to forgive him his sins: and James especially refers to the spiritual restoration of a fallen brother, by what he terms, "The prayer of

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faith" and "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man," which "availeth much," for he says, "And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." For remarks on the principles which should guide believers in praying for others, we refer to the discourse on intercessory prayer. We have quoted the above passages here to show that it is our duty to seek the restoration of the backslider by prayer, and that we must offer in his behalf the prayer of faith, the inwrought and fervent prayer of the heart, if we are to prevail, and see our efforts crowned with success. If you wish to restore a fallen brother, go and plead his case with God, in your closet first, then go to the man in humble dependance upon God's promised aid; while conversing with him, lift up your soul to God for direction, assistance, and success; pray with the backslider before you leave him, and repeat your visits in this prayerful manner a few times, and there are not many backsliders whom you will not restore.

We should persevere in the use of these means till the backslider is restored, and we have the happiness of seeing him rejoicing in God his Saviour. God requires us to do this. "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. . . . Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God: lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."—Heb. xii. 12, 13, 15: Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, and it is our duty to copy his example. God will have mercy and not sacrifice: and, therefore, if we have no mercy upon a fallen brother, and will not seek his restoration, we certainly shall incur his displeasure.

*We must seek his restoration in the spirit of meekness.* Backsliders must not be dealt with in a harsh and an unfeeling manner. It is not our duty to reproach and persecute them, as though it became us to do so. They may have sinned grievously; may have brought sad reproach on the cause of God; and we may have done only our duty in cutting them off from church fellowship; but still they must not be pursued with vengeance, nor be avoided as persons unworthy of our sympathy, our prayers, and our efforts. This course will do no good, but much harm. We must restore such in the spirit of meekness. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. We generally find that anger and

haughtiness have a bad influence upon a fallen brother; they exasperate him, and drive him further from Christ, and deeper into sin. We are not to count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing these that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."—2 Tim. ii. 24—26. However earnest and faithful we are with the backslider, we must exhibit the spirit of meekness. In order to this we must have the mind of Christ, and then, like Paul, we shall beseech the fallen brother with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. It is unnecessary to add more upon this point, as we discussed the manner in which we should converse with sinners in a previous discourse.

### III. The reason by which this duty is enforced.

"Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." This is a powerful reason, and if rightly considered would lead us to restore a fallen brother. "There is great beauty in thus suddenly changing from the Galatian spiritual men to the individual reader himself. It rouses his attention, and carries the exhortation home to him with peculiar force."—McNight.

*It is possible for us to fall, for we may be tempted effectually.* We should ever remember that we are in the body, exposed to temptation; and though we may now be spiritual, yet we may, at some future period, be overtaken in a fault, as our fallen brother has been already. Some, probably, may think that it is impossible for them to be tempted effectually. They have such a sense of the goodness of God, such love to Christ, such deep concern for the welfare of religion, and such horror of apostacy and apostates, that they are ready to say, with Hazael, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Yet Hazael, who was so filled with horror at the thought of the crimes which Elisha told him, with tears, he would commit, went immediately from the presence of the prophet, murdered his master, ascended his throne, and oppressed the children of Israel all the days of Jehonahaz. See 2 Kings, the 8th and 13th chapters. Do any of you shudder at the horrid crime of backsliding? Ye do well. But do not say ye will never commit it; for ye may

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be tempted: neither be ye harsh and cruel censurers of your fallen brother, lest ye should be tempted effectually.

"Beware of Peter's word;  
Nor confidently say,  
I never will deny my Lord,  
But grant I never may."

*Considering thyself, or looking to thyself.* Thou mayst be tempted effectually. As thy brother "fell through a moment of *unwatchfulness*, look about that thou be not surprised. As he fell, so mayst thou: thou art now warned at his expense; therefore *keep a good look out*."—Clarke. If thou shouldest be surprised into sin, which is quite a possible case, wouldest thou like to be overlooked, neglected, and have to say, "No man careth for my soul." "None of my former spiritual companions care for me:" thou wouldest not; then go and restore thy fallen brother. Shouldest thou fall, thou wouldest not like thy former companions to add to thy grief, and harrow up thy soul with keen reproaches, cutting rebukes, and unfeeling censures. "Therefore, as ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Go and restore thy brother in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

"Blessed Redeemer, how divine,  
How righteous is this will of thine;  
To do to all men just the same  
As we expect or wish from them.  
This golden lesson, short and plain,  
Gives not the mind nor memory pain;  
And every conscience must approve  
This universal law of love."

If this universal law of love were kept by all spiritual men, then they would attend to their duty to backsliders, and would be sure to perform it in a right spirit. The following note, from Dr. Clarke, affected us deeply when we first read it. "Lest thou also be tempted. And, having had this warning, thou wilt have less to plead in extenuation of thy offence. It is no wonder if a *harsh and cruel censurer* of a *weak, backsliding* brother, should be taught moderation and mercy, by an awful proof of his own frailty. Such an one may justly dread the most violent attacks from the arch enemy; he will disgrace him if he can, and if he can *overtake* him, he will have no small triumph. Consider the possibility of such a case, and show the *mercy and feeling* which thou wouldest wish to receive from another. From the

consideration of what we *are*, what we *have* been, or what we *may be*, we should learn to be compassionate. The poet Mantuames has set this in a fine light in his Eclogue, *De honesto Amore* :—

“ This is a common evil : at one time or other we  
Have all done wrong. Either *we ARE*, or *have*  
*Been*, or may be, as bad as he whom we condemn.”

The great reason why many of us are careless about restoring a fallen brother, why we treat him with harshness, is because we forget our own frailty, and the possibility of our being overtaken in the same way. “ Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” “ Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded ; but fear.” While the caution and humility recommended, in these passages, will be our best safeguards against all sudden temptations, they will cause us to have compassion on those who have been overtaken in a fault, and cause us to restore them in the spirit of meekness.

Have we done our duty as brethren to those who have fallen ? Have we gone after them, conversed with them, wept over them, prayed for them, and endeavoured, in the spirit of meekness, to restore them ? Or is the word of God applicable to us, which he addressed to the shepherds of Israel, by Ezekiel. “ The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost ; but with force and cruelty have ye ruled them.”—Ezek. iv. 4. If this passage be applicable to us, in reference to our fallen brethren—if we are guilty of such conduct, then hear what God says in the 21st and 22nd verses of the same chapter, “ Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and the lean cattle : Because ye have thrust with the side and the shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad ; Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall be no more a prey ; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.” And when God judges of our conduct to our diseased, sick, broken, driven away, lost brethren ; if it be evident that we have not used means for their restoration ; or, if he find that we have thrust them with side and shoulder, and pushed them with the horns harshly and cruelly, he will deal frowardly with us, and justly

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punish us for the neglect and harshness which we have manifested to our fellow-brethren.

Let us then attend to this study in a right spirit. Let us go after the poor backsliders. They are in a miserable and dangerous condition. Let our eyes pity them, our hearts feel for them, and our tongues spare them. Let us meekly reprove them for their sin, gently soothe their agitated souls, and tenderly beseech them to return to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

"Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."—Jude xxiv. 25.

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## DISCOURSE XI.

"Be ye also enlarged."—2 CORINTHIANS vi. 13.

In this chapter, the apostle beseeches the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. States to them that the apostles, in all things, strove to approve themselves as ministers of God, that the ministry might not be blamed. Informs them of the strange paradoxes which often meet in a minister's life; and, then, calling to remembrance how unjustly the Corinthians had withdrawn from him a portion of their confidence and love, he cries out, in the impassioned language of genuine and vehement love, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now, for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my own children,) be ye also enlarged."

The word *enlarged* signifies, to be dilated and expanded, as the heart in tender love and benevolence; and comes from a root which signifies broad, capacious. "I cannot help observing," says the learned Parkhurst, "that the expression, *Καρδιά πηλαυγται*," i. e. an enlarged heart, "is strictly and philosophically just: the heart of man is really dilated by love and zealous affection; and, in consequence, while he is under those *joyful* passions, his pulse becomes *strong* and *full*."

As the apostle's love to the Corinthians was increased, he calls upon them for a similar increase of love toward himself. Though we might dwell upon the words, *be ye also enlarged*, in exactly the same sense; yet, we think, they are capable of being, justly and properly, used in a more extended sense; therefore, we shall give them a wider scope, and a freer application. To all Christians, therefore, who desire a greatly enlarged number of sound conversions to God, we would say, in the language of the apostle, "Be ye also enlarged."

Let us consider,

I. The enlargement needed.

II. The motives which should induce us to seek it.

III. The means by which it can be secured.

I. The enlargement needed.

*We would by no means urge you to seek an enlargement of the number of your worldly acquaintances. We would, in this*

respect, insist upon contraction, rather than expansion. You, as Christians, have too many mere worldly acquaintances already. They do you no good, but much harm. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate." "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God."—James iv. 4.

*Nor would we urge you to enlarge your business.* Some of you have too much already for your peace, your joy, and your usefulness. There are many who cannot discharge rightly their duties to God, to their neighbours, to their families, and to their own souls, because they are overcharged with the business of this world. If your business is large enough to give you and your families proper food, proper clothing, proper shelter, your children a proper education, and something to bestow to Christ's cause and God's people, be content: you have all that is needed. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."—1 John ii. 15, 16, 17. In ninety-nine cases, probably, out of every hundred, it is the pride of life which causes Christian men to enlarge their business. It is not necessary for their families; they have now every thing that they really need to make them comfortable and respectable; neither is it, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, that men enlarge their business because they wish to glorify God and save immortal souls. The pride of life is the only reason, with too many, who call themselves by the name of Christian, when they take upon them more than a sufficient amount of this world's cares. They must have a splendid shop, or a splendid establishment, or a splendid farm; and then they will be able to vie with their neighbours, and be thought something of by their fellow earthworms. Thus, to gratify their pride, they must enlarge their business.

*Nor would we urge you to be over anxious about increasing your wealth.* For, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced

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themselves through with many sorrows."—1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. The positive command of the Saviour is, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—Matth. vi. 19—21. We dare not, therefore, urge you to amass riches; but we would "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."—1 Tim. vi. 17—19. Seekest thou great things for thyself; seek them not.

The enlargement that we would urge you to seek, is such that will enable you to discharge more efficiently your duties to the souls of your fellow-men. We would urge you to seek an enlarged heart. "The scripture attributes to the *heart* thoughts, reasonings, understanding, will, judgment, designs, affections, love, hatred, fear, joy, sorrow, anger; because, when these things are in a man, a motion is perceived about the heart."—Hob. Lexicon. "And in this respect the style of the New Testament is conformable to that of the Old." That Paul refers in the text to an enlargement of the heart, is evident from the context. Hence, he says, "Our heart is enlarged. . . . Be ye also enlarged." We urge you, then, to seek spiritual enlargement.

WE BESEECH YOU TO INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE. The powers of the human mind are capable of indefinite enlargement. There can be no bounds placed to its acquisitions of knowledge. "To the soul of man there seems to belong the principle of interminable progression. Who shall say what are its high capabilities of knowledge and enjoyment?" The high intellectual attainments of some men, the mighty researches and discoveries of others, plainly prove, that, by industry, the mind of man may be enlarged to a wonderful extent. While we, therefore, would not for a moment dissuade you from enlarging your minds, by the acquisition of useful knowledge, we especially urge you to enlarge your minds by the acquisition of that knowledge which will enable you to win souls to Christ, and save them from death.

Seek to obtain an increased acquaintance with God. What room there is here for enlargement. How little do the wisest and best of us know of God, of his works and ways, compared with what they know who dwell before his throne! We cannot by searching find out God to perfection! We cannot know God in this imperfect state, even as he is known in heaven. "We see through a glass darkly." Still, however, it is possible for us to know much more of God than what we at present know; and the more we know of God, the better qualified shall we become to save souls from death, and bring them to the knowledge, the love, and the enjoyment of God. We should strive to gain more knowledge of Jehovah, as "A just God and a Saviour." We may gain much knowledge of the attributes and perfections of God, and yet be no better ourselves, and do no more good to the souls of men than devils. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."—James ii. 19. The profligate Dr. Lardner, who seduced Mrs. Heavysides, and while living with her in defiance of the law of God, delivered lectures in the United States on the being, attributes, and perfections of God. And, from the well known ability of the doctor, we doubt not but they would be of the highest intellectual order. But his own mind must have been a hell while he delivered them; and no saving good to the souls of men is it likely they will ever produce. That your knowledge of God may be saving to yourselves and to your fellow-men, we want you to know God experimentally and savingly, as well as intellectually. The apostle Paul is exceedingly anxious that believers should increase their experimental knowledge of God's love to our race, and of his ability and willingness to save us to the uttermost. Hear his prayers: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with the fullness of God."—Ephes. iii. 14—19. Again he prays: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being

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enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe."—Ephes. i. 17—19. This is the enlargement of mind we wish you to seek. We want you to feel within the Spirit's might: to comprehend with all saints the greatness of divine love, manifested through Christ, that ye may be filled with the fulness of God: to comprehend in the clearest and fullest manner possible the greatness and worth of those spiritual and eternal things which he has caused you to hope for: to obtain correct, scriptural views of the magnificence, riches, and blessedness of that inheritance to which you are heirs; and to know, by heartfelt experience, the exceeding greatness of his power in them that believe. You know something of all these things; but there wants enlargement. You know but little yet, to what you may know, if you will only follow on to know the Lord. Your abundant usefulness depends upon your knowledge of God. If you are to be more successful in saving souls, you must get an increased acquaintance with God. Be ye also enlarged.

WE BESEECH YOU TO INCREASE IN LOVE. "And this I pray, that *your love may abound more and more*, in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent: that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God."—1 Phil. i. 9—11. The heart is the seat of love. It is of very little use increasing knowledge unless we increase love. He that increases knowledge, without increasing love, only augments sorrow. *A capacious understanding, with a narrow, selfish, malignant heart, is the best description that we can give of the devil; and we do not wish you to resemble the arch enemy.* Many think that great intellectual attainments, and genuine, fervent love cannot be found, in a high degree, in the same individual. What folly! Look at Jesus: "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" and yet, he has manifested infinite love, by laying down his life for us. God is infinite in wisdom and knowledge; yet God is love; and we are commanded to be like Christ, to be like God. Love is superior to knowledge; but we are not to neglect the increase of our knowledge under the foolish notion that we shall increase in love by so doing. In understanding be men, in malice be children, in love be saints.



*Be ye enlarged in love to God.* The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: the blessed triune God is worthy of your supreme and constant love. There is not the bare possibility of your loving God too much. You never can pay the mighty debt you owe the Father, for giving his Son to redeem you; you never can repay what you owe to Christ for having loved you, given himself for you as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour; you never can discharge that obligation under which you are to the Holy Spirit, for having enlightened and regenerated your minds, and for having put you in possession of the hope of the glory God. Still, it is your bounden and imperative duty to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, at all times, and under all circumstances. It is quite possible to have your power to love God vastly increased. The heart is capable of expansion. "I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt *enlarge my heart*." There are no more bounds to confine the affections, than there are to confine the intellect; and, therefore, if the intellectual powers of a man are capable of constant progression in sensibility, tenderness, and ardour of affection, let then your hearts dilate in intense, tender, reverential love to the blessed triune God, "whose ye are, and whom ye serve." Be ye enlarged; your hearts are too contracted to hold the fulness of love, the fulness of God. You are, many of you, as yet, too selfish to love God as you ought and as you might. You often complain of the littleness of your love to God. You sometimes sing—

"Dear Lord! and shall we ever live  
At this poor dying rate?  
Our love so faint, so cold to thee,  
And thine to us so great?"

Make, then, a desperate effort, and in the strength of Christ, break the chains which restrain you from loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Cry to the Eternal Spirit, with firm resolution, with strong desire, with unwavering confidence:—

"Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,  
With all thy quick'ning powers;  
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,  
And that shall quicken ours."

*Be ye enlarged in love to all the saints.* Throw off your cold, icy formality; and love each other as brethren, as children of the same Father, as the purchase of the same precious blood, as persons enjoying the comforts of the same Spirit, and as heirs together of the grace of life; love one

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another, with a pure heart fervently. Banish all dissimulation; and let your sincere love to Christ sweetly draw you into each others hearts, and firmly lock you in the arms of genuine affection. Clear away the rubbish of pride, shyness, and distrust, and let the way be open for the manifestation of true brotherly love. Throw down all the walls of separation. Remembered slights, let them be forgotten; old grievances, let them be buried; differences of opinion, let them never be a bone of contention. Go forth in the spirit of forgiveness, and seek reconciliation with any and all of your fellow Christians with whom you have any misunderstanding. Be ye enlarged. Strive to abound in love to all the members of the church with which you are identified; and not only so, but enlarge your hearts, make room in your affections for all who bear the image of Christ, and who love him in sincerity, let them belong to whatever section of the church of Christ they may. Many do not think exactly as you do;—they do not worship in the same house of prayer that you do;—they do not use the same forms in worship that you do;—they do not hold the same principles of church government that you do. And what of all these things? Are they all put together a sufficient reason why you should not love them with a pure heart fervently? Do they worship God in Spirit and in truth? Do they love Christ and serve him in the gospel? Have they the Spirit of Christ, and do they live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit? Then they are your brethren; for they are God's children. And if you hate them, you are murderers, and have not eternal life abiding in you. Be ye enlarged, and embrace in the arms of your expanded love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, that the world may see that you are Christians, and that they may believe that God has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world.

*Be ye enlarged in love to unconverted, perishing sinners.* O for that enlargement of heart which would cause you to feel more deeply and constantly for the miserable and condemned: who are without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world. The heart of God mourns over them, with melting tenderness, on account of their misery and danger. Christ's heart overflows with compassion on account of the wretchedness of those lost ones he came to seek and save. The Holy Spirit daily grieves, on account of their ignorance, impurity, and condemnation. Shall we, then, Christian brethren, shut up our bowels of compassion from them? If we do so, how dwelleth the love of God in us?

Let us seek enlargement. Let us open our hearts to sinners, and make ample room for them in our affections. Let us obtain that love to them that we shall not be able to restrain tears, reproofs, prayers, labours, on their behalf. Be ye enlarged. Shut your hearts against the crimes of sinners; but O! love, greatly love, their precious souls, and pluck them from destruction. Blessed Redeemer—

“ Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart  
With boundless charity divine;  
So shall I all my strength exert,  
And love them with a zeal like thine;  
And lead them to thy open side,  
The sheep for whom their Shepherd died.”

**ENLARGE THE SPHERE OF YOUR BENEVOLENT OPERATIONS.**  
You are doing good, it may be, in various ways; but is it not possible to extend your operations? “There is very much land to be possessed:” many moral wastes to be cultivated, and brought to yield fruit to the glory of God. There are hundreds and thousands of sinners around you who need converting from the error of their ways, and their souls saving from death. With some of these sinners you have an acquaintance; and you are often found, we trust, pleading with them to come to Christ, to be saved by his grace; and are daily offering your prayers to God for their salvation. Continue these pious efforts; they may yet be crowned with abundant success. Still, however, there are other sinners, with whom you sometimes associate, to whom you have not given the solemn warning, the tender reproof, the earnest entreaty. These need your friendly aid, to help them out of the horrible pit and the miry clay. Will you let them sink deeper, and at last be lost for the want of a little of your assistance? Oh no! you cannot be so cruel. Then go at once and enlarge your list of the names of those for whose salvation you specially labour and pray; as soon as you possibly can speak to them, pointedly and affectionately, about their immortal souls; and at once begin offering special prayer for their salvation. Thus you may all enlarge the sphere of your benevolent operations. Personal effort of this kind is needed to save souls; and if you resolve to adopt it, you will soon enlarge the sphere of your benevolent operations.

There are other ways of doing good. The sabbath school, the prayer meeting, the distribution of tracts; collecting for bible, tract, and missionary societies; visiting, reading, and

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praying with the sick ; and supporting, in a pecuniary way, all the great societies which christianity has established for the conversion of the world to Christ, afford fine opportunities for you to extend your operations for doing good to the souls of men. Ask yourself, "Am I doing all I can ? Is there no department of Christian labour in which I can labour to do more good to the souls of men, than what I am doing at present ?" And if these questions are faithfully put, you will soon find a way to extend your benevolent operations. We would say to every child of God, try, in every possible way, to do good ; and trust in God to bless your efforts, and you will be agents in saving immortal souls. The martyr of Erromanga says, "There are two little words in the English language, which I very much admire ; they are TRY and TRUST." These words were Williams's motto ; and whoever reads his "Missionary Enterprises," will see what a vast amount of good that man accomplished, by trying and trusting. TRY and TRUST : let these words be your motto. You cannot tell how much good you may do the souls of your fellow-men till you *try*, and how much God will bless your endeavours till you *trust* him, by essaying to do good, in humble dependence upon him, to succeed your efforts.

Looking to God, then, for direction and assistance, endeavour to enlarge the sphere of your operations, and you will soon find, that, with your humble talents, and limited opportunities, you will be able to accomplish an amount of good that will astonish you, and be of the utmost benefit to the church and the world. Be ye also enlarged.

II. The motives which should induce you to seek such enlargement.

ONE MOTIVE WHICH SHOULD INDUCE YOU TO SEEK THIS ENLARGEMENT, IS AN INCREASE OF POWER. Knowledge is power, and love is mighty to compel.

*The enlargement of which we have spoken, will give you increased power with God.* All Christians have power with God ; but Christians with limited views, contracted affections, and small operations, have little power with God. They obtain only small blessings from God, either for themselves or others ; but those who have an enlarged acquaintance with God, who are full of love, and whose benevolent operations are extensive, secure great blessings. The reasons of this are obvious.

This enlargement will increase our faith in God. Knowledge and love are the sources of faith. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;" and they that love God will surely confide in him. Just in proportion to our knowledge of, and love to God, will be the degree of our faith in God. Whoever is acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, must be aware, that the blessings which God bestows, are given to those who repose faith in him; and are given in degree, proportionate to the degree of faith exercised. Abraham was accounted righteous, because he believed in God. To him was given exceeding great and precious promises; because, "He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." The noble army of worthies, that did such mighty deeds and wonders, whose conduct is held up, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, to our admiration and imitation, accomplished all they did through faith in God. The blessed Redeemer frequently upbraids and reproaches his disciples for the littleness of their faith. He tells them plainly that they cannot cast out devils because of their unbelief; and solemnly assures them, that, according to their faith it shall be done unto them. Without faith it is impossible to please God. If we do not please him, we cannot have power with him. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, *because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.*"—1 John ii. 22. Little faith is constantly troubled with doubts, fears, and perplexities; but great faith is not thus troubled.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone—  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, It shall be done."

Great faith lays hold of the promises with a giant's grasp, and pulls down the greatest blessings which a gracious God has promised. This faith cannot exist in a narrow mind and a contracted heart. It must have room enough in the understanding and affections for its mighty operation. Many have had such enlarged scriptural views of God's ability and willingness to save to the uttermost, and such enlarged love to God and man, that they could believe and receive whatever blessing they desired and prayed for, which God had promised. Be ye also enlarged.

This enlargement will increase the spirit and power of prayer. Prayer has power with God. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." We cannot obtain anything from God without prayer; of this, you, who study the Bible, must be fully convinced. Knowledge and love are the foundation of prayer, as well as of faith. The man who has an enlarged acquaintance with God; whose heart expands with love to God and man; and whose sphere of labour is extensive, is sure to be *much* in prayer, and *mighty* in prayer. He goes to the throne of grace with his petitions in one hand, and his pleas in the other; and he cannot, he will not be denied. Such is his knowledge of God, his love to God, his sense of the need and suitableness of that for which he prays, that he asks boldly and importunately for the good he desires. And if any want to know how he dare pray in such a manner, here is his answer: "This is the confidence that we have in God, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."—1 John v. 14, 15. An enlarged mind and heart, enables him to draw nigh to God, in the full assurance of faith, to ask for those greater blessings which his enlarged sphere of operation demands. And not only so, but such is the spirit of prayer, which this enlarged Christian possesses, that he asks largely. According to God's command, he opens his mouth wide, when he comes to the throne of grace, that he may realize the truth of the promise, "I will fill it." Having an enlarged mind, and a capacious heart, he thinks no blessing too great for him to ask for, and to receive, which God has promised. He knows too much of God, and loves him too well, to doubt, for one moment, either his ability or his willingness to give what he has promised. Such a Christian, also, comes very often to the throne of grace, and every time asks for larger blessings; and the blessed God is so much delighted with him, for putting such implicit confidence in him, for so greatly honouring him by asking largely and frequently, that he gives him all that he has promised. The following anecdote forcibly illustrates this point:—

"It is said that a man once asked Alexander the Great to give him some money to portion off a daughter. The king bade him go to his treasurer and demand what he pleased. He went, and demanded an enormous sum. The treasurer was startled, said he could not part with so much without an

express order; and went to the king, and told him that he thought a small part of the money the man had named might serve for the occasion. 'No,' replied Alexander, 'let him have it all. I like that man: he does me honour; he treats me like a king; and proves, by what he asks, that he believes me to be both rich and generous.' "Let us," says Mr. Newton, in quoting this anecdote, "go to the throne of grace, and put up such petitions as may show that we have honourable views of the riches and bounty of our King."

The fervour of the enlarged Christian's prayers is also great. He prays in the Holy Ghost. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom. viii. 26. His fervour at times will overcome his speech, and he will be able only to groan his wishes to the throne; but those groans will have more power with God than the best compositions, called prayers, which the wisest and best of men have written. Faith and prayer are the hands of the soul, which take hold of God's strength, and secure every blessing we need; and his all-sufficient grace to render successful the Christian enterprises in which we are engaged. If we are to save many souls, we must obtain more power with God; and we cannot secure this but by Spiritual enlargement.

*This enlargement will give increased power with men.* As Christians, we ought to be ambitious to get as much power over men as we possibly can: for our power with men is not for their injury and destruction; but for their edification and salvation. All Christians have some influence with their kind; but all do not possess that influence over their friends and neighbours which Christ commanded them to have and to exert. In fact, all have to mourn the little influence which saints possess with the ungodly. We urge upon your attention enlargement of mind and heart, that you may acquire greater power over your fellow-men. Light and love, exhibited in their behalf, will have an influence upon their minds; and the brighter that light shines, and the more intensely that love burns, the greater will be your power over the minds of sinners. An enlarged acquaintance with Jehovah, and augmented love toward God and man, will give increased clearness to your instructions; increased solemnity to your warnings; increased energy to your reproofs; increased tenderness to your expostulations and entreaties; increased fervour to your prayers, and increased force to your



example. Augmented light will make you shine so brilliantly, and increased love will make you burn so intensely, that you will be able, by God's assistance, to enlighten the darkest mind, and melt into tenderness, penitence, and love the hardest heart. Dark indeed must be that mind, and hardened past all feeling must be that heart, that does not see and feel the beauty, the power, the value of religion, when placed before them with that clearness and force with which you will present religion to their minds—with light so brilliant, and with love so vehement. And not only so, but the great power of God will accompany all you say and do, so that sinners must both see and feel the necessity of religion, and numbers of them will be induced to give glory to the Lord your God. Your power over the minds of the ungodly must, in the very nature of things, be increased by this enlargement. And is not this a sufficient motive to induce any and every child of God to seek and obtain this enlargement. It is, if rightly weighed; for this increased power with God and man, will give greater success in the great work of saving souls.

*Another motive which should induce you to seek this enlargement, is an increase of purity.* It is impossible for us to become too holy. Many cry out against perfection, who would do well to examine whether they are perfect enough to enter heaven; whether they have purity enough to enable them to save souls from death. Were the time and breath which are spent in striving to show how little purity Christians possess, and in attempts to prove that more cannot be obtained till death, spent in beseeching God for Spiritual enlargement, the mighty deficiency of purity, observable in many professors of religion, would be soon supplied. The increase of divine knowledge and love will ever increase purity. The more we know of God, and the more we love him, the more are we humbled on account of our imperfections, the more do we loathe sin, the more are we weaned from earthly attachments, and the more do we earnestly desire to become like our blessed Lord, who was meek and lowly in heart. This enlargement causes us to leave the things that are behind; to go on to perfection; to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit: perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. The great reason why so little purity is enjoyed by the mass of professors, is because they have so little knowledge of God, and so little love to him, that they have no intense desire to become like him: no restless anxiety to be made partakers of his holiness. When spiritual enlargement

is obtained, then the soul pants after God, as the thirsty hart pants after the water brooks; then the feet run in the way of God's commandments; then the cry of the soul is, "I shall be satisfied when I awake up in thy likeness."

This enlargement must increase our purity; for it will make us so to abhor the thing unclean, that we cannot rest until we are freed from every spot, blemish, and wrinkle, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Look at Job, when he received enlargement. What a blessed effect had a clear manifestation of the Godhead upon his understanding, affections, and deportment. Hear his own language. When God is in the midst of the sublime description of his works and ways, Job is so penetrated with grief, on account of his impurity, that he interrupts the Lord, and says, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."—Job xl. 4, 5. And when Jehovah had finished his address to the venerable patriarch of Uz, "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do everything, and no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered things that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."—Job xlii. 1—6. And those among us, who hide counsel without knowledge, who utter things they understand not: things too wonderful for them, which they know not, respecting purity of heart; would be just as much confounded, and humbled, and penitent as Job was, if they were to obtain the enlargement which he did, when he said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." The very same purifying effects were produced in Isaiah, when his heart was enlarged by the glorious vision which he saw in the temple. Hear his statement of that blessed manifestation, and of the effects it produced upon his heart. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the

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Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."—Isa. vi. 1—7. This enlarged acquaintance with God, revealed to Isaiah his impurity, caused him, in bitter anguish of heart, to deplore it; and then, with the swiftness of a seraphim's movements, it was purged away. Let the objectors to instantaneous sanctification study this passage; and no more utter things that are understood not, and meddle no more with the holy verities of God's word, which are too wonderful for them. Increased knowledge of the great Jehovah will lead to the instantaneous destruction of sin. That blessed man, John Fletcher, of Madely, once prayed to God to reveal to him the utmost depravity of his own heart; and such was the effect produced by the sight, that he nearly died from the discovery; and he would have died, we doubt not, if God had not taken away his iniquity and purged his sin. And, in like manner, greater discoveries of God and greater love to him, will reveal our latent impurities, fill us with grief on account of them, and cause us to wrestle with God until he sanctifies us wholly, and makes us fit to bear his vessels.

Thus, then, an increase of purity is obtained by the enlargement we urge you to seek: and this increase of purity will not only make you more glorious in the eyes of the Lord and in the sight of men; but it will give you a greater disposition to do the will of God in saving souls. When you are entirely cleansed from sin, you will feel no reluctance to go after the lost: no unwillingness to reprove, rebuke, and exhort your fellow-sinners. There will be a springing forth of the soul to meet the will of God in this matter. When Isaiah was purged from his iniquity, he heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us." And though it was a message of terror, yet, Isaiah's will is now so completely absorbed in the will of God, that he spontaneously answers, "Here am I; send me." Just so will it be with the children of God in the present day, when they are cleansed from their latent impurities, which make them

unwilling to do all they might to save souls. Surely, then, we may cry on this ground, "Be ye also enlarged."

*Another motive which ought to induce you to seek this enlargement, is an increase of joy.* Every fresh addition to our stock of divine knowledge—the augmentation of our love to God and man—and the increase of our usefulness, must add to our joy. The more enlarged our conceptions of God are, the more we feel of love to God and man, and the more good we accomplish, the more do we increase our spiritual enjoyments: for in the knowledge and love of God, and in the promoting of the best interests of our race, alone is found the real happiness of man. Real joy, substantial bliss, cannot be found in any worldly things. There is as much gospel truth as poetry in the following lines:—

"Joy is a fruit that will not grow  
In nature's barren soil;  
All we can boast, till Christ we know,  
Is vanity and toil.

But where the Lord has planted grace,  
And made his glories known,  
There fruits of heavenly joy and peace  
Are found, and there alone.

A bleeding Saviour seen by faith,  
A sense of pard'ning love,  
A hope that triumphs over death,  
Give joys like those above.

To take a glimpse within the veil,  
To know that God is mine,  
Are springs of joy, which never fail,  
Unspeakingly divine.

If then pure and essential joy is derived from God's grace, the manifestation of God's glory, and the possession of the hope of that glory, which you Christians do not question, then it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the increase of grace, the increase of the knowledge of God's glory, and the increase of hope, must greatly augment our joy. Still further, this enlargement, as we have already seen, gives us greater power with God and man; thereby increasing our success, in our attempts to do good to the souls of men;—therefore, there must, of necessity, be an increase of our joy: for success in saving souls ever produces unspeakable joy. We reap in joy, after sowing with tears. We come again with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us, after going forth weeping, bearing precious seed. And, in addition to this, an

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increase of purity must augment our joy. The joy which springs from holiness is of the purest kind, and of the highest order. God is infinitely happy, because he is infinitely holy. The nearer we approach his likeness, the greater becomes our joy. Here, then, is another motive why we should seek this enlargement. And are not these motives sufficient to induce any sincere Christian to seek the enlargement proposed? To increase your power with God and man, to augment your purity, and to enhance your joy, we urge upon your attention the words, "Be ye also enlarged."

Consider,

III. The means by which this enlargement can be secured.

"Be ye also enlarged," may be regarded as a solemn command, urging us to use the means which will secure this enlargement in knowledge, in love, and in usefulness. Our limited knowledge, our contracted love, our little usefulness, are not in accordance with the will of God, with the privileges we enjoy, and with the duties we have to perform. "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to them that walk uprightly?"—Micah ii. 7. "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."—Isa. xlix. 1. It is the will of God that we should have light and love enough to save souls; we are favoured with every means requisite to enable us to save souls; our duty to God and man requires us to be ever zealous in the great enterprise of saving souls. How is it then that so few are saved by us? We are not straitened in God; but we are straitened in ourselves. We know too little of God, we have too little love both to God and man, and we confine ourselves to so limited a sphere, that it is impossible for us to save many souls. Be ye also enlarged; use the means, vigorously and diligently use the means, which are requisite to secure the enlargement needed to save souls. We shall proceed to notice some of the means which must be employed to secure this enlargement.

*Meditation is absolutely needed to obtain this enlargement.* You read your Bibles much, you converse frequently on spiritual things, you hear many sermons; but you are as contracted in your views, as cold in your affections, and as limited in your labours, as you were, perhaps, years ago. The reason of this is want of meditation. How few professors of religion think at all; and fewer still think to purpose,

upon those things which are requisite to enlarge the mind, expand the heart, and break the bonds which bind them to earth, and hinder them from saving souls. Employ your thoughts, in your hours of retirement, yea, at every convenient season, on the nature, character, and perfections of the blessed God: dwell especially on the love of God, in our redemption by Christ Jesus: think much upon the miserable condition of your fellow-men, who know not God: revolve in your minds the means by which God proposes to save them: forget not the relation in which you stand to God and your fellow-men; and the high and important duties that your position, as the salt of the earth, and as the light of the world, imposes upon you; and, then, you cannot rest without this enlargement. "Meditate on these things," and as far as your other duties will allow, "give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." But unless you will meditate on these things, you will remain the partially enlightened, phlegmatic, barren professors, which some of you have been for years. You may as well expect a sinner to be saved without repentance, or a man to go to heaven without holiness, as to expect enlargement without meditation.

*Hope for this enlargement.* We are saved by hope. Desire and expect an enlargement in your understanding, in your affections, and in your sphere of usefulness, and enlargement will assuredly follow. Fear produces hesitancy; despair cuts the sinews of effort—puts a stop to all improvement. Before you can gain the enlargement we have described, you must cherish enlarged desires, and indulge high expectations. Dr. Reed, in his remarks on the advancement of religion in the church, says: "Hope is the genius of religion. Hope becomes the church. In the midst of darkening skies, and clashing opinions, and partial disaster, let the church clothe herself with hope as with an invulnerable garment. Indulge great hope. Expect for yourself a measure of light, and holiness, and joy which you have not known. Expect for your family, that they shall be all born of God, and be enrolled among the living in Jerusalem. Expect that the church shall become one in faith, in heart, and in action; a purified and spiritual body, filled with all the fulness of God. Expect that the dark forms of evil, which abound in the world, shall cower away before the risen glories of the Son of righteousness:—that a second time the Creator and Redeemer shall say, 'Let there be light, and there shall be light.' Oh! there is renovation in hope. We become the

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things we hope to be. To abound in hope, is to abound in service, in suffering, and in joy. It not only sustains us where we are—it inspires us with additional and celestial joy. It bears the martyr to the stake; the hero to victory; the Christian to heaven. Have hope, great hope. ‘Sanctify yourselves; for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.’” How strikingly just and appropriate are these remarks of the learned, venerable, and pious Dr. Reed. What can you do without hope? If you would enlarge the horizon of your knowledge; if you would have your hearts expanded with generous, ardent love; if you would extend the sphere of your operations, and do more good to the souls of your fellow-men, you must hope, greatly hope, for this enlargement.

*Pray for this enlargement.* The things you desire, you must pray for. “Ask and ye shall have,” is the law of the kingdom of grace. Do you hope for this enlargement? then pray for it with all the fervour of your souls. When God promised, by Ezekiel, to the house of Israel, that he would cleanse them from all their idols and filthiness, and give them a new heart and a new spirit: to take away the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh; and to put his spirit within them: to make them intelligent, holy, compassionate, and obedient, he said, “I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” And if we are to be enlarged, and have our wishes fulfilled, we must cry:—

“Give me the enlarged desire,  
And open, Lord, my soul,  
Thy own fulness to require,  
And comprehend the whole.  
Stretch my faith’s capacity  
Wider and yet wider still;  
Then, with all that is in thee,  
My soul for ever fill.”

If your hearts are enlarged, God must do it. The Psalmist acknowledged this, when he said, “I will run the way of thy commandments, when *thou shalt enlarge my heart.*” In answer to prayer, “God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.”—1 Kings iv. 26. Why then should we not pray?

“Enlarge my heart, to make thee room;  
Enter, and in me ever stay:  
The crooked then shall straight become;  
The darkness shall be lost in day.



Jabez of old "Called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."—1 Chron. iv. 10. And is not God as willing to do these things for us, as he was for Jabez? He is; and abundantly more willing to give us spiritual enlargement, than he was to enlarge the coast of Jabez. Let us copy the example of that good man, and cry, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and 'hat thine hand may be with me, and keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me," and then God's blessing will rest upon us; our hearts will be enlarged; Jehovah's hand will be with us, and give success to our endeavours to save souls; and he will keep us from evil and sorrow. Pray, then, earnestly and importunately, for enlargement.

*Believe for this enlargement.* "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."—Mark ii. 24. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."—James i. 5—8. These passages show that we must believe in God for enlargement: that our faith must be unwavering; and that we must be as firm as a rock in our purpose, to obtain enlargement. Make the effort. You desire and pray for enlargement—believe for it, and Christ says you shall receive it. Let neither men nor devils cause you to flinch from your purpose to obtain enlargement; nor any thing on earth induce you to waver in your faith. "Believe in the Lord, so shall ye prosper." You have a little faith, and have not, we trust, denied God's name. Put forth, then, the little faith you have, and you will find that it will bring enlargement: "God cannot deny himself: he is faithful that promised." Doubt not the ability of God to enlarge your hearts; doubt not the willingness of Christ to intercede for you, when you pray for enlargement; doubt not the love of the Spirit, whose office it is to enlighten, quicken, and make fruitful. Fear not, only believe, and enlargement shall come from the giver of every good and perfect gift. God waits to be gracious to you in your abundant enlargement. Believe,

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and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged. He has given you life; he is supremely anxious to give it to you more abundantly. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Put then your trust in God. Dishonour him not by doubts and fears. Be not faithless, but believing; and according to your faith it shall be done unto you.

*Liberality is especially required to secure this enlargement.* "But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand."—Isa. xxxii. 8. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself."—Prov. xi. 24, 25. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Acts xx. 25. These scriptures do not speak in vain. If we would be enlarged in knowledge, in love, in usefulness, we must be liberal with the mammon of unrighteousness. God is unbounded in benevolence. Ye know the liberality of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor. The Holy Spirit is God's free or liberal Spirit. Unless we are liberal, God will not enlarge us. He abhorreth the covetuous. He declares that the covetuous man is an idolator. God cursed ancient Israel for covetuousness. Their niggardliness in his worship caused him to withhold from them even the blessings of providence, and induced him to reprove them in these words: "Ye have sown much, and brought in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. . . . Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came too little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house."—Haggai i. 6, 9. And after reproving them for their niggardliness in his worship, by Malachi, he says, "Bring all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—Mal. iii. 10. And Paul says, "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man accordingly as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for

God loveth a cheerful giver."—2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. Would you, then, reap a bountiful harvest of spiritual blessings, you must scatter your temporal good with a bountiful hand. The money which is given to God's cause and God's poor, from love to God, secures the highest interest, and produces the greatest good of any money we either hoard or spend. It brings enlargement here, and an increase of glory hereafter. One great reason why we have so few bright and shining lights in our churches, is because we have so many who are too covetous to let God bless them, and make them a blessing.

And what shall we say more, to induce you to use these means to your enlargement. For the sake of God's glory, be ye also enlarged; for then you will be able to bring more glory to his blessed name. For Christ's sake, be ye also enlarged; for then you will be able to do much more than what you are now doing, to extend the triumphs of his cross. For the love of the Spirit, be ye also enlarged; for then you will bring him more honour, by a better manifestation of his graces. For the sake of your own welfare, be ye also enlarged; for your ignorance of God, your littleness of love, your want of usefulness, often make you very unhappy. Be ye enlarged, and there will be no more cause for sighs, and tears, and groans, on these grounds. For the sake of the souls of your unconverted fellow-men, be ye also enlarged—they are perishing; and you have not sufficient wisdom and love to deliver them from going down to the pit. O pray:—

"Come, gracious Lord, descend, and dwell  
By faith and love in every heart;  
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel  
The joys that cannot be express'd.

Come, fill our hearts with inward strength,  
Make our enlarged souls possess;  
And learn the height, and breadth, and length,  
Of thy immeasurable grace.

Now to the God, whose power can do,  
More than our thoughts or wishes know,  
Be everlasting honours done,  
By all the Church, through Christ his Son."

## DISCOURSE XII.

### INTERCESSORY PRAYER NEEDED TO SAVE SOULS.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—

JAMES v. 16.

The subject for consideration, at this time, is intercessory prayer. To intercede is to act between two parties; to solicit favours from one, with whom we have influence, for a third party, who has no influence with him from whom the favours needed must proceed. That it is our duty, as Christians, to pray to God on behalf of our fellow-men, is clearly evident from the Holy Scriptures. In the epistle to the Ephesians, it is written, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints."—Eph. v. 18. In the first epistle to Timothy we read, "I EXHORT, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority: that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."—1 Tim. ii. 1—4. In the context, the apostle James says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Before entering upon this subject, there are a few things which are necessary for us ever to remember, in our approaches to the throne of grace, which we shall briefly place before you. In the first place, a righteous man is not warranted in asking, either for himself or for others, any thing which is contrary to the revealed will of God. "If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us;" but if we ask any thing contrary to his will, he heareth not us: therefore, when intercession is made, the person interceding must take care to ask for those things which the scriptures authorize him to ask for.

Secondly : A righteous man, when interceding for the temporal welfare of others, must regulate his intercessions by the principles upon which Jehovah governs this lower world. God has, in past ages, worked miracles for the benefit of men in answer to prayer, and he is still able to do so if he pleaseth ; but we have no right to expect that he will invert the order of his providential dealings with men, to suit the whimsical notions and conceited fancies of any man, or of any number of men, however high he, or they, may stand in the estimation of God, on account of piety. Therefore, if we pray for the recovery of a person from sickness, or for any thing else, which appears to be an impossibility, according to the usual course of things, we must present all our petitions for such matters in the spirit and language of Christ, who, when praying to be saved from death, in the garden of Gethsemane, said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

Thirdly : A righteous man, when pleading for the salvation of others, must bear in mind man's free agency and moral accountability. A righteous man's intercessions have power with God ; will cause the Spirit of God to strive more powerfully with the sinner for whom he prays ; may cause the long-suffering God to protract the sinner's life, to allow him a greater space for repentance. Yet, after all, the sinner may refuse to comply with God's terms of salvation, and perish through unbelief and impenitency. The following parable forcibly illustrates our meaning : "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard ; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it : And if it bear fruit, well : and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."—Luke xiii. 6—9. The Vine-dresser's intercession availed much with the Owner of the vineyard, when the tree was allowed to stand another year, and when permission was given to use more means to render it fruitful ; but it was to be cut down at the end of the year, if it did not bear fruit. And, in like manner, our prayers, for the spiritual good of our fellow-men, may be answered ; yet, the sinner may perish through his own stubbornness and folly.

Fourthly : A righteous man should also remember, that, in the present world, he sees but in part and knows but in

part ; consequently, may not see, in all cases, the efficacy of his intercessions. His fervent intercessions may be successful without his knowledge. In all probability, the day of judgment will show, that many of the intercessions of righteous men, which were supposed to fail, were fully answered. Having made these preliminary remarks, we shall now proceed to show :

I. That the fervent intercessions of a righteous man avail much with God.

II. That there are sufficient reasons apparent why God answers his intercessions.

III. That it is the imperative duty of every righteous person to offer intercessions with fervency, and to persevere therein, as long as he lives, with unabating ardour.

I. That the fervent intercessions of a righteous man avail much with God.

This is a subject of vast importance. The present and eternal well-being of thousands and millions of our race depend upon the intercessory prayers of righteous men : it would, therefore, be both unwise and dangerous to enter the labyrinth of conjecture, to look for evidence to convince us of the truth of the proposition contained in the text. We shall examine, first of all, the records of the Old Testament, and see whether, and to what extent, the intercessions of righteous men, who lived before the gospel era, prevailed with God.

The first intercessory prayer recorded in the Old Testament is that of Abraham's, for the preservation of the cities of the plain. Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar had become so wicked, that God determined to destroy them with fire and brimstone from heaven. The piety of Abraham caused Jehovah to reveal his purpose to that venerable patriarch ; who, immediately after hearing God's intention, began to intercede with God, and used on the occasion the following words : " And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked ? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city : wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein ? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked ; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee : Shall not the

judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for the lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall twenty be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham went unto his place."—Gen. xviii. 23—33. The above is a striking example of the power of intercessory prayer. Though God was bent upon destroying the cities of the plain, yet, he would have spared them, if only ten righteous persons had been found there, in answer to the intercessions of Abraham. The object which Abraham had in view was gained by his intercessions, though not in the precise way that he expected. Whoever studies this interesting narrative, of Abraham's intercessions with God, must perceive that Abraham's supreme concern was, that the righteous should not be destroyed with the wicked. Lot was evidently in the mind of Abraham. God knew it; and he answered Abraham's intercession in the deliverance of Lot from the fearful destruction which came upon the Sodomites: hence, we are informed, in the 19th chapter: "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt." Thus, it is evident, that Lot was saved, in answer to the intercessory prayers of Abraham.

We have another remarkable instance of the power of intercessory prayer, recorded in the 32nd chapter of the book of Exodus. Moses being in the mount with God, for a longer period than the impatient Israelites thought necessary, the people gathered together, and caused Aaron to make them a



golden calf, which they worshipped as the God that brought them up out of the land of Egypt. Jehovah's wrath was kindled at this daring impiety; and he said to Moses, "Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants, to whom thou sweardest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."—verses 10—14. Here a whole nation is saved from instant destruction by the intercession of one righteous man. There are found other intercessory prayers of Moses, the man of God, in the 14th, 16th, and 31st chapters of the book of Numbers, which you would do well to consult.

In the verse following the text, the apostle refers to a remarkable instance of the power of intercessory prayer. He says, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." The prayers of Elijah, on these occasions, are not recorded in the Old Testament; but the circumstances to which the apostle alludes are recorded at large in the 17th and 18th chapters of the first book of Kings.

In reference to the success of intercessory prayer for individuals, you may consult the 12th chapter of Numbers, where Miriam is recovered from leprosy, at the intercession of Moses: the 17th chapter of first of Kings, where is given the narrative of the restoration of the widow's son to life, at the intercession of Elijah: the 4th of the second of Kings, where you will find an interesting account of the restoration of the Shunamite's son, through the prayers of Elisha: the 42d chapter of the book of Job, where Eliphaz and his two friends are directed to offer up for themselves a burnt-offering, and get

Job to pray for them, so that they may escape the wrath of God, which they had incurred, by not speaking of him the thing that was right, as his servant Job had. These are a few cases, taken from the many recorded in the Old Testament, which prove, to a demonstration, that the intercessory prayers of righteous men, previous to the gospel era, availed much with God.

That the intercessions of righteous men, under the gospel dispensation, avail as much with God as the prayers of patriarchs and prophets did before the coming of Christ, is clearly evident from *the extensive grant which Christ has given to all his followers, and the promise annexed to that grant*. We might prove the point under consideration, from examples recorded in the New Testament, of the power of intercessory prayer; but an examination of the *grant* and *promise* of Christ to his people, will be amply sufficient for our purpose. In the 15th chapter of John's gospel, and the 7th verse, we read thus: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." This passage is remarkably comprehensive. In it there is a condition expressed, a grant made, and a promise given. Christ here gives a charter to his people, allowing them to ask for what they please, with his solemn assurance that they shall receive it. Some think that there is danger, great danger of Christ's grant being abused: that some will take advantage of it to ask for improper things; but there is little danger of this. To whom is the grant made, but to the *pious* and *intelligent* people of Christ. "If," says Jesus, "*ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will*:" the persons, therefore, to whom this grant is made must be pious; for they must abide in Christ. If a man abides in Christ, he must be a partaker of the Spirit of Christ. Union with Jesus is not only essential to piety, but it is piety itself; for, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—2 Cor. v. 17. The persons to whom this grant is made must also be intelligent, as well as pious; for Christ's words must abide in them: His words must be known, understood, believed, loved, revered. It is not sufficient for us to be united with Jesus, to have all our prayers answered. His word must dwell in us richly in all wisdom, or we have no right to expect that we shall have all that we ask. Those in whom Christ's words dwell, must be intelligent, in the highest and best sense of the term; for they will know God and his Son

Jesus Christ : and therefore it follows, as a necessary result, that such a man will never ask any thing contrary to the will of God, to the mind of Christ. A pious, intelligent man can never ask God, in the name of Christ, for any thing that it would be wrong for God to give. The word of Christ teaches him what to pray for, and what to expect. When such a man, therefore, offers intercessions for others, they will, they must be in accordance with God's will ; and consequently he has a full warrant in the above-mentioned grant to expect that they will avail much with God. "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done." While the nature, character, and word of God remain unchangeable, the intercessions of righteous men will avail much with him. Though some half informed, half sceptical professors may decry intercessory prayer ; yet, every intelligent, pious, decided Christian will believe in its efficacy, and heartily engage in its exercise. And "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful : he cannot deny himself."—2 Tim. ii. 13. While Jehovah abideth faithful to his promises, and faithful to his Son, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man will avail much.

That the intercessions of righteous men avail much with God, is abundantly evident *from the answers to prayer which have been frequently given to the saints in modern times.* Without exposing ourselves to the charge of fanaticism, we may affirm, that there are few, very few Christians, we might say there are none, who have attended rightly to the duty of intercessory prayer, but have received indubitable evidences of its efficacy—of its mighty power with God. That which we have seen, and heard, and read, declare we unto you. We have often witnessed the power of the intercessions of righteous men ; we have often seen the dark, the impure, the stiffnecked, and hard-hearted sinner fall beneath their power ; and heard him cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner ! Lord Jesus, save me : I perish !" and through the intercessions of righteous men, we heard the same sinners afterwards cry, "O Lord, I will praise thee : though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Instances of this kind were not uncommon in the days of the apostles ; nor have they been uncommon in Great Britain and America, since the days of the Wesleys, and of George Whitfield. If you search the annals of Methodism, or of any Christian church where Christ has been preached, and where both ministers and people have discharged aright the duty of intercessory prayer, you will

find almost innumerable proofs of the truth of the proposition stated in the text; and, after making all your complaints about heated imaginations, unbecoming gestures, stentorian voices, irregular proceedings, you will be forced to confess, that the effectual fervent prayers of the righteous prevail much with God. How frequently is it even now the case, when the people of God are assembled, and sinners with them, that, when the person leading the devotions prays for the enlightenment and conversion of the ungodly, there is a stir, a commotion; conviction flashes upon the minds of the unconverted; the sight of their guilt and danger fill them with sad surprise; and cause them to cry, "Men, brethren, what shall we do?" These things we have witnessed even within these walls. It is the Spirit of God who produces these blessed effects; and he evidently produces them in answer to the intercessions of righteous men; therefore, their intercessions must avail much with God. And although, when many righteous men are engaged in offering intercessory prayer, the efforts will be greater; yet, we must ever remember, that the intercessions of one righteous man will avail much; for God will not, cannot suffer a righteous man to pray in vain. Praying breath is never wasted. Some of you, my brethren, have been astonished frequently at the success of your intercessions. You have been gratified, delighted, enraptured, in seeing evils removed from your families, your neighbourhood, your church, almost as soon as your intercessions were uttered; yea, before you have called—when the prayer was in the heart, but unuttered by the tongue, God has answered; and while you were speaking, he has heard. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers."

Consider,

II. That there are sufficient reasons apparent why the intercessions of righteous men avail much with God.

We shall not pretend to give all the reasons which might be assigned. We select the following:

*The blessed God hears and answers our intercessory prayers, to encourage us in the performance of this duty.* If Jehovah refused to listen to our intercessions, we should be discouraged, and give up the practice of this duty, which would be an evil of no small magnitude. Intercessory prayer unites us to those for whom we pray. It causes us to sympathize with

them, to love them, to do them all the good that lies in our power. It is impossible not to feel for those whom we bear upon our hearts at the throne of grace. It is impossible for us to hate and injure those who are the subjects of our constant intercessions. Christ's command to all his people is: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you:" this will be hard work without prayer; and therefore he adds, "and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." We may feed our enemy when hungry, give him drink when thirsty, clothe him when naked, and help him in every way, should he need our help, and yet not love him; but we cannot long pray for him without loving him. If malice exists in the heart, when we begin to pray for him, prayer soon changes that malice into love. Intercessory prayer prevents broils in families, and dissensions in churches; inasmuch as it causes us both to bear and forbear with those for whom we intercede. If strife has been produced, either in families or churches, nothing will stop it sooner than intercessory prayer. We have read of a good man who, when parties came to him with malice in their hearts, and anger in their looks, for the purpose of differing with him, would, at the first, propose to pray about the matter; and when this was done, he would then ask them what they had against him; and the answer often has been, "Oh, nothing particular; I will say no more about it." The best way to kill an enemy, is to pray him to death. This weapon never fails. We are commanded to "Let brotherly love continue;" and, certain we are, that frequent intercession for the saints, is the best conservator of brotherly love in the wide world. We are commanded, as we have opportunity, to do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith; and what greater good can we do them than frequently and fervently praying for them? As one of the old divines justly observes, "By other acts of charity we give them a little out of our own substance; but by effectual fervent intercession we open for them God's treasury." A poor saint may do more for his fellow-man, by intercessory prayer, than a rich man could do for him with thousands of gold and silver. As intercessory prayer, therefore, fosters the spirit of peace, of harmony, of love; as it unites us to those for whom we pray in indissoluble bonds; as it does so much good to our fellows, God, who takes the highest pleasure in beholding these things, hears and answers our intercessions, to encourage us in the discharge of this blessed duty.

*God regards and answers the intercessions of righteous men, to manifest his approbation of their piety.* Take a striking example of this fact from the book of Job. The friends of Job had unwisely and unjustly charged him with hypocrisy, because he suffered great calamities. Now, mark how God vindicated the character of his upright servant Job, and manifested to those very friends his approbation of the piety of the venerable patriarch of Uz. "And it was so, that, after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him I will accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, went and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before."—Job xlii. 7—10. Here we have a full proof of the innocence and integrity of Job; and of the high value which Jehovah placed upon his piety. His three friends also could no longer question the genuineness of his piety, after this signal manifestation of God's approbation. He is accepted of God; and his prayers alone can prevent the wrath of the Most High from falling upon them.

Righteous men are supremely anxious to glorify God. They deny themselves—take up their cross, and follow Jesus through evil report, as well as through good report;—they count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord;—they are willing to suffer, if need be, the loss of all things, that they may win Christ;—they confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth;—they desire a better country, that is an heavenly;—wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. This being the case, God will listen to their intercessions, and will give them what they ask for others, in order to evince his high estimation of their piety. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but he loveth him that



followeth after righteousness."—Prov. xv. 8—9. When God refuses the sacrifice of the wicked, and answers the intercessions of the saints, he gives manifest proof of his detestation of sin, and his approval of holiness. He shows to all that his favours are bestowed upon the pious; and, that, if men would have his blessing, which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow, they must renounce sin, and follow peace, truth, and holiness.

*Jehovah answers the intercessions of righteous men, to put honour upon their faith in him.* Without faith it is impossible to please God. Prayer without faith will never be answered. God has commanded righteous men to make intercessions for all men; and he has promised to grant them what they pray for: therefore, they believe that their intercessions will prevail with God, for the benefit of those for whom they intercede. Instead of doubting God's word, they exercise firm faith in his promises, and attend to intercessory prayer, with the full assurance that they will avail much. If we turn our attention to the biographies of modern saints, we at once discover, that the intercessions of those men who have been most like Abraham—strong in faith, giving glory to God—have been most successful. We might instance Bramwell, John Smith, Carvosso, and Ralph Waller. These were all men of strong faith; their intercessions were mighty; and by them the convincing, converting, sanctifying grace of God was brought upon hundreds of immortal souls. These men did not excel their fellows, of the same class, in intellectual power; but they excelled in strength of faith, and in mighty intercession; and, therefore, God honoured them with more abundant success in saving souls, than he has done those who, with greater grasp of thought, have lacked the strength of faith, and the mighty intercession which they possessed. The reasons of this are obvious. God is a jealous God; he is jealous of his honour. When the veracity of his word is doubted, or questioned, his honour is impeached. Unbelief casts an injurious reflection upon the perfections of Jehovah's nature. It denies his wisdom, his power, his truth, his justice, his holiness, his goodness, his faithfulness. Unbelief charges God with folly, with weakness, with falsehood, with injustice, with impurity, with cruelty, and with infidelity. Unbelief is the master sin: there is none equal to it in the whole catalogue of sins. It is the root of all the sins which disgrace humanity, insult the Godhead, and drown men in perdition. God, therefore, cannot answer the prayer of un-



belief; were he to do so, he would deny himself. But by faith all the perfections of God's nature are honoured. Faith, strong faith recognizes the infinite wisdom, the almighty power, the inviolable truth, the inflexible justice, the immaculate holiness, the boundless goodness, and the immutable faithfulness of the blessed God. And when God is honoured by our implicit confidence, then he will honour us, by answering our intercessions, and bestowing upon others the good things we have asked for them. "Them that honour me, I will honour." This is the principle of Jehovah's government, and the rule of his procedure with the saints. The more we know God by faith, the more he will honour us, by the greater blessings he will bestow, in answer to our intercessions. Had we a stronger faith in God, we should be far more successful in our intercessions; far more sinners would be convicted, converted, and sanctified, through our intercessions, than what now are. We do not avail much with God, by our intercessions for the salvation of sinners, because of our unbelief.<sup>1</sup> If we would be honoured, greatly honoured by having many souls saved, through our agency, we must learn to "ask in faith, nothing wavering;" for such is the intercession which avails much with God, and such is the faith that he will honour. Those who exercise strong faith in God, when interceding for the salvation of men, will not be confounded by having their expectations cut off.

*The Lord answers the intercessions of righteous men to magnify the office they fill.* Righteous men fill, in this world, a very important office. They are a Royal Priesthood. We entirely and firmly believe that there is now no priesthood, either in heaven or in earth, in the strict and proper sense of the term, but that of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet, in a figurative and accommodated sense, the children of God are frequently called priests in the New Testament. As the priests, under the Old Testament dispensation, were washed with water and anointed with oil; as they had blood applied to the right ear, to the thumb of the right hand, and to the toe of the right foot, when they were put into the priest's office; even so, we are not priests unto God until our iniquity is purged away. All who are priests unto God, under the gospel dispensation, have been washed by the washing of regeneration; have been renewed with the renewing of the Holy Ghost; have received the unction of the Holy One: that unction which makes a man walk erect in the atmosphere of piety, carrying along with him, wherever he goes, the fragrance of

the fruits of the Divine Spirit. All who are priests unto God have been sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; and which is far more efficacious in removing guilt, than all the blood of beasts which was poured on the Jewish altar. "For, if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"—Heb. ix. 13, 14. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This precious blood has been sprinkled upon the hearts of all who are now priests unto God; for, by this blood we are made both kings and priests unto God: hence, it is written, "Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."—Rev. i. 5, 6. When Aaron was purified, and the priestly robes were put upon him, it was his duty to offer sacrifices and make intercession for the people; and, in like manner, it is the duty of the people of God, under the gospel dispensation, to discharge the functions of priests, by presenting in their prayers, before the throne of grace, the perfect and perpetual sacrifice of Christ; and pleading with God for the present and eternal salvation of their fellow-creatures, on the ground of the sacrifice of Jesus. Oh! the blessedness of being priests unto God. This honour have all the saints under the New Testament dispensation. This was not the case under the Levitical economy. Alluding to the Aaronic priesthood, Paul says, "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron."—Heb. v. 4. But in the priesthood under the New Testament dispensation, there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, high nor low—we have all one office; for, of the whole community of Christians, it is said, "Ye are a royal priesthood." This fact Peter places beyond all doubt, all controversy, in the second chapter of his first epistle. Hear his words: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, *an holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . But ye are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not

a people, but are now the people of God : which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."—verses 5 and 9. If, then, all Christians are priests unto God, it is their duty to offer up intercessions, supplications, prayers, and thanksgivings for all men. And as God magnified the Aaronic priesthood, by giving answers to the priest, who wore the Urim and Thummim ; even so does God magnify the office of righteous men, by answering their effectual fervent intercessions.

*The Almighty God answers the intercessions of righteous men, to make them happy.* Righteous men are often very miserable, because God is dishonoured in his own world, by his own creatures ; because Christ is rejected by those whom he has purchased with his own blood ; because the Spirit is insulted and grieved by those whom he strives to save from endless woe. Rivers of tears sometimes run from their eyes, because men keep not God's law. They weep when they find poor, lost, ruined sinners enemies of the cross of Christ. They mourn bitterly when they see men doing despite to the Spirit of grace. And well they may ; for to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are righteous men indebted for all they are and for all they hope to be. But this is not all. Righteous men see their fellow-creatures sunk in guilt, depravity, degradation, and misery ; they behold them going down to the pit with rapid strides ; they know, that in a short while, they will be the companions of the devil and his angels—suffering with them the vengeance of eternal wrath ; and, hence, they are very unhappy on their account. Jehovah feels for them ; and, therefore, when they come to his throne, and make known to him their feelings, he relieves their misery, by answering their intercessions. Besides, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man is often accompanied with much pain. The *δενσις ἐν γόμφῳ*, of the righteous man, seems to denote the *inspired* prayer, or the prayer wrought in him by the operation or energy of the Holy Spirit. Paul also alludes to this, when he says, " Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what to pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit of God often gives righteous men such views of the wickedness and the danger of sinners, that they become so wretched, have such powerful agonies, that they would die if God did not answer their intercessions. The Rev. John Smith once said to a colleague, while the tears streamed down

his cheeks, "I am a broken-hearted man : I shall die if souls are not saved." Now, it would be positive cruelty in God not to answer the groanings which his own Spirit inspires, and not to relieve the burdened heart upon which his own Spirit has placed the burden of souls. Those who pray thus, in the Holy Ghost, may have weeping for a night ; but God will send them joy in the morning. He hears their groanings ; he knows what is the mind of the Spirit who has produced them ; and he will answer those mighty intercessions, in the salvation of souls, to the unspeakable joy of the man who has groanings too big for utterance. God delights in the happiness of righteous men ; and though they are vexed, from day to day, by the filthy conversation of the wicked ; though they are in agony at times, when praying for their salvation ; yet, as these sufferings abound, so does God make the consolations abound. He will never suffer the prayers of righteous men to go unanswered, lest he should make them constantly miserable.

*God regards and answers the intercessions of righteous men, to gratify his own benevolence.* God is love. He loves all the human race. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He has sent his Spirit to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." He has given his word for the benefit of all mankind. He has commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature. He has enjoined upon his people the duty of making intercession for all men. God has done all this, because he loves our race, and is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. When, therefore, righteous men intercede for the present and future welfare of any man, or any number of men, they are only pleading for that which it is God's good pleasure to give. His own heart being already, by his own benevolence, disposed to bestow favours upon men, he cannot withhold them when he hears the unwrought, fervent prayers of his people, presented in the name of his well-beloved Son, for the salvation of the lost. We may rest assured, from the well known character of God's benevolence, that the intercessions of righteous men will avail so much with him, as to cause him to give every blessing they ask to those sinners for whom they intercede ; providing he can do so without injuring his character, without overturning the established order of his government, and without destroying man's free agency and moral accountability. These

reasons are, we think, quite sufficient to show why Jehovah condescends to answer the intercessions of righteous men. He does so to encourage them to discharge this duty; to manifest his approbation of their piety; to put honour upon their faith; to magnify their office; to make them happy; and to gratify his own benevolence.

Consider,

III. That it is the imperative duty of every righteous person to offer intercessions with fervency, and to persevere therein, as long as he lives, with unabating ardour.

From what has been already stated, it is evident, that righteous men have much influence at the throne of grace—mighty power with God. That it is their imperative duty to use their power with God, for the benefit of others, will appear evident from the following considerations:

*The common ties of humanity demand this much from every Christian.* The misanthrope is the greatest monster that treads the face of the earth. The lion that prowls in the desert, hunting for blood, and the tiger that pounces upon his prey, from the concealment of the thicket, are not to be compared with that ferocious being, in human shape, who hates mankind in the bulk, or who cherishes malice and hatred in his heart toward any human being. Such an individual may be more justly compared to the devil, than to any being that belongs to the world in which we dwell. The language of inspiration is, "Love thy neighbour as thyself. Honour all men." If we strip men of all adventitious appendages, they are the same. If we take away the mere external distinctions, which characterize different men, and look at mankind in the abstract, all are on a level. Man is the same, whether he sits upon a throne or upon a dunghill; whether he be found a rich man or a beggar. All men are children of one Almighty Father, made originally in his image. We have but to trace the lowest outcast back to his father, and to his father's father, and from one generation to another, and at last we shall find his progenitor in the first man. The most outcast, ruined, degraded, unhappy man, is the son of Adam, and Adam was the son of God. All mankind have sprung from this root; and though the original likeness of God is defaced by sin, yet, in every man is left some trace of the bright original.

Beailes, God has made of one blood all the families that dwell upon the face of the earth. Through change of climate, situation, and other circumstances, there may be diversities in the colour of the skin and in the tastes and habits of men; some, also, may be stupid, and others intellectual; some may be civilized, others may be savage; yet, one common blood flows in all their veins. Open the vein of the poor slave that groans beneath his galling chains, and that smarting beneath the rod of his brutal task-master, and you will find in his veins blood the same as your own. The structure of his body is like yours. His mind possesses the same elements as yours. Though they may not have been cultivated, yet there is the same imagination—the same memory—the same reason—the same judgment—the same conscience. You will find also in them the same sentiments of gratitude and love.

All men, too, are gifted with the same common immortality. The poor beggar, the wretched outcast, the abandoned profligate—must live for ever. Oh! what importance and value does this stamp upon every man! View man in this simple light, and he will rise up before you, however low, degraded, and lost, with an importance that nothing can exceed. All, too, have been redeemed by the blood of one common Saviour. Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man. He gave himself a ransom for all. There is not a human being on the face of this earth that Christ has not redeemed with his most precious blood; and does not this stamp a high value upon every man, and firmly bind every man to his fellow.

All men, too, are susceptible of the same spiritual and everlasting life. Men, though fallen, may be raised; though ruined, may be restored; though dead, may be made alive. Every man may receive the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, and be raised to the favour, image, and fruition of God. This is true of all men, without any exception whatever; for "God willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

Looking upon men in this light, we must see that the human race are bound together by the strongest bonds, which ought not to be broken by any thing or circumstance. It is the bounden and imperative duty of every man to do good to all men, as he has opportunity; and that man who manifests hatred, contempt, or indifference toward any of our race, is a base wretch—who destroys the order and harmony of the works of God. Is a Christian warranted, then, in breaking those



ties which bind man to man? Verily not. Christianity is designed to displace the selfishness of fallen humanity, and to restore to the human heart the principle of love and universal brotherhood, which sin has destroyed. Christianity requires us to "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."—Phil. ii. 4. And even charges us in these words: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."—1 Cor. x. 24. Christianity requires us, peremptorily, to do good to all men, without the least restriction, save want of ability and opportunity, and to intercede for all men, without any exception whatever. No man is to be excluded from the sympathies, labours, and intercessions of righteous men. The man that calls himself a Christian, and who does not make intercessions for the benefit of his fellow-men, has no right to the appellation; and we call upon him, in the name of Christ, either to act worthy of his profession, or to give up the name of Christian. Prayer is a public gift, designed for the benefit of all men; and if we do not use it for the good of others, as well as our own, we commit sin. We sin against God, we sin against our neighbour, we sin against our own souls, by neglecting to make intercessions for all men. When we go into our closets, and shut to our door, we must not shut our hearts against every human being besides *self*; but we must embrace our neighbours, our countrymen, our race, in our expanded affections, and pour forth our most fervent prayers for their present and eternal good. When the Israelites, on one occasion, exhorted Samuel the prophet to pray for them, he gave them this memorable answer, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."—1 Sam. xii. 23. And we as much sin against the Lord, by not praying for mankind, as Samuel would have done if he had ceased to pray for Israel. Christians, you have influence in the court of heaven, with the King of kings—your intercessions avail much with God; know, then, that the common ties of humanity demand that your power with God shall be exerted in behalf of your perishing neighbours, your perishing countrymen, your perishing world.

*The ties of family have stronger claims upon our effectual, fervent intercessions, than the bonds of humanity. If the children of men generally have such strong claims upon our fervent intercessions, surely the members of our own families have still stronger claims. "God has set the solitary in families," for the wisest and best of purposes. Husbands and*



wives are bound together by a bond so solemn, so sacred, so indissoluble, that they are one flesh; and nothing but death, or a crime worse than death, must put them asunder. Parents are united to their children by bonds peculiarly strong. They have been the agents in bringing them into this wicked world, and it is especially their duty to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children are bound to their parents by ties equally binding. To their parents they are indebted, under God, for their natural life, their preservation and support in childhood and in youth, and the means of gaining their livelihood while they remain in this vale of tears; therefore, it is their duty to honour their parents, and do them all the good that lies in their power. Brothers and sisters, being children of the same parents, are bound by the ties of blood-relationship to help, protect, and support each other, in every possible way, while in this trying, harrassing, perplexing, suffering world. The ties of family are not to be trifled with—are not to be broken. Those who do trifle with them, and break them, trifle with and break the law of God; and will meet with condign punishment, either in this world or the next, and, without repentance, probably in both, but certainly in eternity. In a temporal sense, the man who does not “provide for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” What, then, must be said of that man who, professing the religion of Jesus, uses not the power he thinks he has with God for the saving benefit of his own family? Language is not sufficient to describe his character. If it be a sin not to pray for the world at large, it must be a much greater sin not to pray for those who are, in the highest sense, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, and spirit of our spirit. The Apostle Paul had continued heaviness and sorrow of heart for his brethren and kinsmen after the flesh. He would have died for them on a cross, if by that means he could have saved them from the wrath of God. “Brethren,” says he to the Romans, “my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” It is the bounden and imperative duty of every righteous man to pray for all the members of his family, with all the fervour of his soul; and he must not fail, nor be discouraged in interceding for them, until they are converted, or until they die, and are placed beyond the reach of the converting grace of God. Family bonds demand this much from every righteous man. We fear that many righteous men too much overlook their

families, in their intercessions. They do not wrestle and agonize with God for the conversion of their families as they ought. They have not continued heaviness and sorrow of heart, as Paul had, for their kinsmen and kinswomen; and, hence, they are not found often making intercession for them, with groanings which cannot be uttered; and this may be the very reason why they are not converted. Hear what St. Augustine says of his mother: "While I was yet walking in sin, often attempting to rise, and sinking still deeper, my dear mother, in vigorous hope, persisted in earnest prayer. I remember, also, that she entreated a certain bishop to reason me out of mine errors. He was a person not backward to attempt this, where he found a docile subject. 'But your son,' said he, 'is too much elated at present, and carried away with the pleasing novelties of his opinion, to regard any argument; as appears from the pleasure he taketh in perplexing many ignorant persons with his captious questions. Let him alone; only continue praying to the Lord for him; in the course of his study he will discover his error.' All this satisfied not my anxious parent; with floods of tears she still persisted in her requests, till, a little out of patience by her importunity, he said, 'Begone, good woman; it is impossible that the child of such tears should perish.' " Perhaps some of you who hear us this day have unconverted relatives—partners, children, parents, brothers, sisters, or some other dear relations who are without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world. What are you doing for their conversion? Are you doing all you can with God, by intercessory prayer? They may be hundreds, yea thousands of miles from you, so that you cannot personally converse with them; but you may reach them through heaven. Offer up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him that is able to save them from death. This is your duty; this is your privilege; and may be their salvation. For such intercessions will avail much with God, on their behalf. If you desire your nearest and dearest relations to be converted, keep not silence, and give God no rest, till they are either converted, or removed into eternity.

*The children of God have the strongest claims upon our fervent intercessions.* This is evident from Christ's declarations, contained in the 3rd chapter of Mark: "There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren

without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."—verses 31—35. The saints are united by bonds far stronger than those which bind together the children of earthly parents. They are the sons of God; all brethren by spiritual extraction—sons of God, therefore, united by the love of Jesus, their elder brother—sons of God, filled, actuated, sanctified, strengthened, and comforted by the same Spirit—sons of God, travelling in the same road, to the same glorious home—sons of God, heirs together of the grace of life, and must eternally dwell together in the same heaven: therefore, as our nearest and dearest relatives, they have the first and the strongest claims upon our fervent intercessions. The command to make intercessions for all saints abounds in the Word of God. This must be done in the present life. After Christians die, prayer for them is needless, for they are safe. Prayer implies want and danger; but the spirits of the just made perfect are free from both. They are above the reach of prayer. All their wants are now supplied, and all their danger is forever past. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Rev. vii. 16, 17. It is no use praying for them; but it is of the utmost importance to make intercession for all saints living on the earth. We are commanded to love all the saints with a pure heart, fervently; but without intercession love will soon wax cold. And not only so, but our fellow-Christians on earth have the same duties to perform, the same afflictions to suffer, the same trials to bear, the same enemies to contend with that we have; therefore there ought to exist the utmost sympathy between us and them, and mutual prayer ought to be offered to God for each others welfare. They, too, are engaged in the same glorious work; they are labouring with us, to pull down the strong holds of the devil, to extend the kingdom of Jesus, and to fill the earth with the glory of God: hence we ought to feel the deepest interest in their success, and pray earnestly to God that they may be victorious. They are in danger equally with ourselves of being discouraged, growing weary

of the work, fainting under their burdens, falling from grace, and coming short of heaven ; consequently, we ought to feel that desire for their perseverance which will cause us to intercede with God, to give them a sufficiency of grace, to enable them to stand firm unto the end. Christ, our glorious High Priest, carries all their names, with our own, on his breastplate, and intercedes continually before the throne for all on earth who believe on his name ; and in this respect he gives us an example, that we should tread in his steps. The saints of God also pray for us, and solicit an interest in our prayers ; and, therefore, it would be both unjust and unkind in us not to make intercession for them. It cannot be expected, because it is not possible, that we can pray for all saints individually ; but we can pray for some individually, and for all collectively. The prayer of Christ, in the 17th chapter of St. John's gospel, is the model for our intercessions for the saints. He there prays for the saints in all ages ; and what does he pray for ? their preservation from the evil that is in the world—their sanctification—their union, that the world may believe that God has sent his Son—their eternal glory and bliss. Here, then, is our model : a better never can be given. Let us intercede for all saints, that they may have what Christ prayed for, and then all will be well.

Here we see it is the duty of all righteous men to offer up intercessions with fervency, and persevere therein with unabated ardour. Do you want to see the world deluged with righteousness ? "Be instant in prayer." Do you desire the conversion and eternal salvation of your relations ? "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving." Do you want the saints to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free ? With all perseverance make supplication for all saints. If you want the world saved, you must not forget to pray for the ministers of the Gospel. "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you : And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men : for all men have not faith."—2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. If you desire the conversion of men, in every part of the world, then you must intercede with God, to increase the number of wise, pious, faithful ministers. "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few : Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

Christians ! God has made you kings and priests, that you may be the rulers and the intercessors of the world in which you dwell. Remember that you must strive to make the inhabitants of this earth obedient to the faith : and to this end your intercessions must be inwrought by the Holy Spirit ; fervent, effectual, constant. The world is up in arms against the Lord and against his anointed. Wrath is gone out from the Lord ; the plague is begun. Millions of immortal souls have perished. Millions more are perishing. What is to be done ? What did Moses the prophet and Aaron the priest do, when the children of Israel charged them with having killed the people of the Lord, and when God, for their wickedness, sent the plague among them ? “ Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement : for there is wrath gone out from the Lord ; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation ; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people : and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed.”—Numbers xvi. 46–48. Go ye and do likewise. The atonement is made ; the incense is ready. Go quickly, and plead the atonement of Christ. Run to the throne of grace, and cry to God, in the name of Jesus, to spare the people : yea, to convince, convert, sanctify, and save them, that they may be delivered from going down to the pit ; for God has found out a ransom.

Sinners ! you do not pray for yourselves ; therefore we do not expect you to pray for others. It would be of no use, if you did ; for David says, “ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” We warn you of the end of a godless, prayerless life. You may think that you can cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God, with impunity ; but it is impossible. If you will not humble yourselves before God, and by prayer, in Christ’s name, seek the forgiveness of your sins, and the renewal of your natures, you must perish. If you do not begin to pray, and if you do not live a life of prayer, you must lie down in everlasting darkness and sorrow : you must go into hell, where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is never quenched. You need not perish. If you will begin to pray, you shall be delivered from sin and hell ; “ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Think of the value of your precious

souls : the greatness of God's goodness : the worth of a Saviour's love : the longsuffering of the Holy Spirit : the joys of heaven : the torments of hell : the nearness of death : the certainty of judgment : the length of eternity ; and then ask, " Is it wise to neglect my soul : to despise God's goodness : to slight the Saviour's love : to resist the Spirit ; and, thereby, lose the joys of heaven : secure the torments of hell : be miserable in death : be covered with shame at the judgment : be damned to all eternity ? " O sinners ! repent of your sins ; believe in Christ : pray to God to be merciful unto you, or you will be lost for ever and ever. Ask the saints to pray for you ; for the text declares, " The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. " May the eternal God open your eyes, soften your hearts, subdue your wills, forgive your sins, adopt you into his family, and give unto you the Spirit of Grace and Supplications, for his dear Son's sake. Amen.

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## DISCOURSE XIII.

GREAT FAITH ESSENTIAL TO GREAT SUCCESS IN  
SAVING SOULS.

" Have faith in God."—Mark xi. 22.

In the 12th, 13th, and 14th verses of this chapter, the Evangelist relates one of the solemn and interesting events which abound in the life of Christ. The narrative reads thus : " And on the morrow, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry : And seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon : and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves ; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it." Matthew informs us that this fig tree stood by the way-side ; therefore it was public property, and any traveller had a right to its fruit. This fig tree had a flourishing appearance ; but on it there was no fruit. The time of figs was not yet. " As it was not, as yet, the time for *gathering in* the fruits, and yet *about the time* when they were *ready* to be gathered, our Lord with propriety expected to find some. But as this happened about *five* days before that passover on which Christ suffered, and the passover that year fell on the beginning of *April*, it has been asked, ' How could our Lord expect to find ripe figs in the end of March ? ' Answer, Because figs were *ripe* in Judea as early as the *passover*. Besides, the fig-tree puts forth its fruit *first*, and afterwards its leaves. Indeed, this tree, in the climate which is proper for it, has fruit on it all the year round, as I have often seen. All the difficulty in the text may be easily removed, by considering that the *climate of Judea* is widely different from that of Great Britain. The *summer* begins there in March, and the *harvest* at the passover, as all travellers into those countries testify ; therefore, as our Lord met with this tree five days *before* the passover, it is evident, 1st. That it was *the time of ripe figs* ; and, 2ndly. That it was *not the time of*



*gathering* them, because this did not begin *till the passover*, and the transaction here mentioned took place five days before."—Dr. Adam Clarke.

Our blessed Lord cursed this fig-tree, on account of its barrenness: and if we are unfruitful professors, bearing leaves without fruit, Jesus Christ will as certainly curse us as he did this fig-tree. "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots." How quickly does any thing, or being, fade, wither, and die, that the Saviour curses! "And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered." Upon this occasion, Christ preached to his disciples the following short, but highly important and deeply interesting sermon: "And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass: he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

"The case of the barren fig-tree, which our Lord cursed, has been pitifully misunderstood and misapplied. The whole account of this transaction, as stated above, I believe to be correct: it is so much in our Lord's usual manner, that the propriety of it will scarcely be doubted. He was ever acting the part of the *philosopher, moralist*, and divine, as well as that of the *Saviour of sinners*. In his hand, every providential occurrence, and every object of nature, became a means of instruction: the *stones* of the desert, the *lilies* of the field, the *fowls* of heaven, the *beasts* of the forest, *fruitful* and *unfruitful trees*, with every ordinary occurrence, were so many grand *texts*, from which he preached the most illuminating and impressive sermons, for the instruction and salvation of his audience. This wisdom and condescension cannot be sufficiently admired. But shall the example of the *fruitless fig-tree* be lost on us, as well as on the Jews? God forbid! Let us therefore take heed, lest, having been so long unfruitful, God should say, *Let no fruit appear on thee*

*hereafter forever !* and, in consequence of this, we wither and die away !"—Dr. Adam Clarke.

The great improvement which Christ made of the withering of the fig-tree evidently was to teach his disciples, in all ages, that great faith in God is essential to great success in all spiritual things. We now wish to impress this upon your minds, especially in relation to success in your work of saving souls.

We propose to consider,

- I. That it is the Christian's duty to have great faith in God.
- II. That great faith is essential to great success in saving souls.
- III. That the use of proper means will secure great faith in God.
- I. That it is the Christian's duty to have great faith in God.

*We are commanded to HAVE FAITH.* And what is faith ? It is the reception of any report, or the assent of the mind to any proposition : it is the cordial reliance of the heart upon any promise : it is an active principle in the soul, which leads us to take what is promised, and to do what is commanded. Having carefully studied the Bible, to obtain correct views of the nature of faith, we are enabled to state, without any hesitancy, and without any mental reservation, that such is the sum of what the Holy Scriptures teach, in reference to the nature of faith. That this view of faith, when it refers to God and spiritual things, is scriptural, is evident from the following passages of God's word. Faith, we say, is the reception of any report, and the assent of the mind to any proposition. In the tenth of Romans we read, "Lord, who hath believed our report ? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In the eleventh of Hebrews we read : "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The first of these passages intimates, that faith is believing the report of the gospel, and is produced by hearing the word of God ; the second shows that faith in God's word gives a present being, or subsistence, to spiritual things which are hoped for ; and such an evidence of unseen realities, that the mind is fully convinced of their existence, their truth, and their importance ; and yields an implicit assent to what is stated concerning

them in the word of God. There can be no faith, therefore, where the word of God is not known, or where the veracity of its Author is not credited.

Faith is also the cordial reliance of the heart upon any promise. In the fourth of Romans it is written: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." And in the tenth of Romans we read: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The assent of the understanding to the truth that Christ was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, is not sufficient to save any man. There must be a reliance of the heart upon the promise of God: a full persuasion that God is able to do what he promises, and a warm-hearted confession of the love of God, in the gift of so great and precious a Saviour as Jesus. Faith is that reliance of the soul upon the promises of God which prevents staggering, which holds fast the truth, and which causes the soul to give glory to God, and the mouth to confess Jesus as "My Lord, my God, my Saviour." While the heart simply trusts in Jesus,

"The tongue breaks out in unknown strains,  
And sings his wondrous grace."

Faith is an active principle in the soul, which leads us to take what is promised, and to do what is commanded. An old lady's definition of faith applies to the former part of this statement. When asked, "What is faith?" she nobly replied, "Taking God at his word;" and if she had only added, "and doing what he commands," it would have been a far better definition of faith than numbers we have seen in the works of some learned men. That faith is an active principle, impelling the soul of man to take what God promises, and to do what he commands, is evident from the following passages. In the eleventh of Hebrews we read: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went

out, not knowing whither he went." We might quote the whole of this chapter, from the fourth verse to the end. Paul describes faith more by what it *obtained from God, and did for God*, than by anything else. In Galatians he says: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."—Chapter v. 6. James reasons thus: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."—James ii. 14—22. John says: "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God?"—1st Epistle v. 4, 5. These passages show that faith is an active principle in the mind of man, leading him to *take* what God has promised, and to *do* what he has commanded. The three things we have enumerated above, as the elements of genuine faith, we think are distinctly pointed out in the following verse, from the eleventh of Hebrews: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having *seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*" Here it is clearly seen that faith causes its possessor to apprehend the promises, convinces him of their truth, induces him to embrace them, to renounce the world, to desire and to live for a better country.

*Christ here commands us to have faith in God.* To have faith in God is to believe in His existence and bounty. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Hebrews xi. 6.

To have faith in God is to believe that all that is contained in his word is truth; and especially to believe the record which God has there given us of his son Jesus Christ. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.—1 John v. 9-11. To have faith in God, is to believe that he is both able and willing to perform what he has promised. God, by "His divine power, hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."—2 Peter i. 3, 4. The exceeding great and precious promises given unto us must be understood; and we must believe that God is able, and as willing as he is able, to impart to us, to the very letter, all that he has promised, or we have not true faith in God.

*Christ has commanded us to have the highest degree of faith in God.* In all marginal Bibles the passage reads, "have the faith of God." The following note is from Dr. Adam Clarke, and clearly expresses the meaning of the text:—"Εξείν πιστιν θεου," is a mere Hebraism: *have the faith of God*, i. e., have strong faith, or the *strongest* faith, for thus the Hebrews expressed the superlative degree; so the *mountains of God* mean exceeding *great mountains*—the *hail of God*, exceeding great hail, &c. The faith of God therefore means the strongest faith, exceeding great faith. There are degrees in faith. Christ upbraided his disciples for the littleness of their faith; while Abraham is commended throughout the Bible for the greatness of his faith. Jesus said frequently to his disciples, "O ye of little faith; wherefore did ye doubt?" Of Abraham it is said, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. . . . So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."—Gal. iii. 6-8. The faith which Christ in the text commands us to exercise in God,

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is such a faith that Abraham exercised when, at the command of God, he left his father's house and became a pilgrim on earth; such a faith as he exercised in the promise of a son, when "against hope he believed in hope that he might be the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb." Such a faith as he exercised when, at the command of God, "He offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac thy seed shall be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." This is the faith which Christ commands us to possess. A faith in God equal to every command, to every promise, to every trial. Such a faith as this is essential to success, great success in saving precious, immortal souls. Little faith may save now and then a soul; but we shall not see souls converted by scores, by hundreds, and by thousands, until all the followers of Jesus are like Abraham, "strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Ye professed followers of Jesus, while you are, like the disciples of old, in the littleness of your faith, you will be defeated in your efforts to save many souls. Listen to the following short narrative, and learn from it the folly of doing great good with little faith: "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered, and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mount in, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."—Math. xvii. 14—21. The disciples' unbelief, you perceive, hindered them from casting out this devil, and caused the father of the youth to charge them with weakness, and Christ to reprove them. So will it

be with us if we have not great faith. We shall fail in the performance of our duty to the souls of our fellow-men; we shall not get satan out of their hearts: and, hence, we shall be subject to the remorse of an accusing conscience, to the ridicule of ungodly men, to the mockings of devils, and to the reproofs of Christ. In Matthew we are informed that Christ, in his own country, "Did not many mighty works because of their unbelief." And Christ now, in his own church, cannot do many mighty works because of the unbelief of his people. He is able to save to the uttermost; able to convince and convert hundreds and thousands of sinners; but he does not do this because of the unbelief of his followers. Have faith in God, exceeding great faith, and signs and wonders shall be wrought among you in the conversion of immortal souls. "And from this time it shall be said, What hath God wrought." Christians, Jesus Christ your Lord and Master, your adorable and precious Redeemer, commands you all to have the strongest faith in God; and this command you must obey, if you would be eminently successful in saving souls.

II. That great faith is essential to great success in saving souls.

We take it for granted, that, as Christians, you intensely desire the salvation of souls. This consideration has induced us to direct your attention to the important subjects which have already occupied our thoughts, and which, we trust, have been made, and will yet prove to be a blessing. If then you desire many souls to be saved, you must have the faith of God—exceeding great faith. Great faith is essential to great success in saving souls,

*Because it alone can secure great measures of the Holy Spirit's influences.* "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."—John vi. 63. The immortal souls of men are saved, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."—Zech. iv. 6. It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in Christians that makes them successful in saving souls—that makes them a blessing to the world in which they dwell. "He that believeth on me, as the scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"—John vii. 38, 39. The Jews frequently compare the gifts and graces

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of the Holy Spirit to water in general. He is compared to dew, to rain, to fountains, to wells, to rivers. The scriptures abound in this metaphor. Christ, in the passage just cited, compares the Spirit in believers to living fountains of water, when he declares, that "Out of their hearts shall flow rivers of living water." "As the *true spring* is ever supplied with water from the *great deep*, with which it has communication, so shall the soul of the genuine believer be supplied with light, life, love, and liberty, and all the other graces of the indwelling Spirit, from the indwelling Christ." To be successful in saving souls, we must have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us; for it is from him that we derive the disposition and the ability to do good. When the Spirit of God dwells in us, we feel something like what Elihu the Buzite felt when he said, "I am full of matter; the Spirit within me constraineth me. Behold my heart is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer."—Job xxxii. 18—20. And like a poor woman in Yorkshire, who, when at a lovefeast, which the minister was about to close before she had spoken, sprung to her feet, and said, "You must let me speak, or I shall burst." When we are filled with the Spirit, we shall find no difficulty in exhorting, warning, reproving, beseeching sinners. We shall feel as Jeremiah did when he said, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."—Jer. xx. 9. "Out of our hearts will flow rivers of living water" to refresh, and cleanse, and make fruitful the weary, impure, and unfruitful sinners by whom we are surrounded, when we are filled with the Spirit.

Large measures of Spiritual influence are requisite to our abundant usefulness in saving souls. This is not only evident from the fact that the more we have of the Spirit's influences, the better prepared are we for usefulness; but it is evident from all observation and all Christian experience. A babe in Christ possesses a measure of the Spirit, and does some good; but he is not so useful to the church and to the world as a young man in Christ who enjoys a larger measure of the Spirit than a babe in Christ possibly can; nor is a young man in Christ so useful to his fellow-men as a father in Israel who is filled with the Spirit. There is an inseparable connection between large measures of Spiritual influence and

abundant usefulness in the salvation of souls. All the difference there is between a babe in Christ and a father in the church is this: The babe possesses a small measure of the Spirit, but the father is filled with the Spirit. The babe, as well as the father, has received the "unction of the Holy One;" but he has not received, as yet, such a plentiful supply of the holy oil with which the Spirit anoints believers in Christ. If we are to be successful, in saving many souls from death, we must be filled with the Spirit.

If these reasonings are correct,—if they are in exact accordance with the word of God, then great faith in God is essential to great success in saving souls; for it is by faith that we receive the Holy Ghost; and the degree of the Holy Spirit's influences we enjoy is in exact proportion to the faith we exercise in Christ. According to our faith the Spirit is given. Little faith secures but a small measure of the Spirit's influences; but great faith obtains an abundant supply of living water. If this is not the case, we are at a loss to account for the fact, that Jesus, in the context, upbraids his disciples with unbelief, and charges them to have strong faith in God. Not only so, but the Scriptures and the experience of saints both prove that in proportion to our faith are we enriched with the graces of the Holy Spirit, and blessed with success. The faith of the Thessalonians was an exceeding great faith; therefore, they enjoyed much of the Spirit, and were made abundantly useful. Of the Church at Thessalonica, Paul says, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth."—2 Thess. i. 3. "Your faith groweth exceedingly, means to grow luxuriantly, as a good tree in a good soil; and if a fruit tree, bearing an abundance of fruit, to compensate the labour of the husbandman." The results of the great faith of the Thessalonians Paul thus describes, "Ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing."—1 Thess. i. 7, 8. Here we plainly discover that there is an inseparable connection between the degree of faith exercised in God, and the measure of the Holy Spirit's influences possessed. That the abundant usefulness of the Thessalonian Christians was effected through the Spirit of God, no man can question; and

that it was their faith which secured such a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, as to render them so useful, is also beyond controversy; for the Apostle expressly attributes their usefulness to their faith. Paul, in all he says about the faith of the Thessalonians, shows that their strong and thriving faith secured for them larger measures of spiritual influence than other Churches possessed, which had not a faith in God equal to theirs; therefore, their usefulness was the more abundant.

In addition to this, the phraseology employed in the Acts of the Apostles, to place before us the character of Stephen and Barnabas, seems to us to prove, to a demonstration, the inseparable connection between great faith, large measures of the Spirit, and great success. It is said of Stephen, that he was "A man full of faith and the Holy Ghost. . . . . And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles before the people. Then there arose certain of the Synagogue, which is called the Synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."—Acts vi. 5, 8, 10. Stephen, you perceive, was full of faith: being full of faith, he was full of the Holy Ghost: being full of the Holy Ghost, he performed great wonders and miracles among the people, and his adversaries could not resist the wisdom and Spirit by which he spake. Is there no connexion here between great faith, large measures of the Spirit, and great success? Consider also the statement respecting Barnabas: "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."—Acts xi. 22-24. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith, and under his ministry much people was added unto the Lord. Was all this merely fortuitous? Was not he filled with the Holy Ghost, think you, because he was a good man, and full of faith? And was not much people added to the Lord by his ministry, because great spiritual influence attended the word, when preached by Barnabas? Effects cannot exist without a cause. For the conversion of many people at Antioch we must assign an adequate cause: and, surely, if the great measures of the

Holy Spirit's influences, which attended Barnabas's preaching, were not the cause of their conversion, then we can find no other: and we are sure if Barnabas had not been a good man, full of faith, the Holy Spirit would not so signally have blessed his labours. The boldest sceptic can put no other construction than this upon the narrative of Barnabas's character, labours, and success at Antioch. In the present day, also, if you find a man superior to his fellow-Christians, in spirituality of mind, in devotedness to Christ, and in successful efforts in winning souls, you will discover in him a stronger faith in God than you ever find in ordinary Christians. So that we may boldly affirm that there is an inseparable connection between the degree of faith exercised in God, and the measures of the Holy Spirit's influences received; and, therefore, great faith is essential to great success in saving souls. It is so,

*Because we can only remove the hindrances which prevent the salvation of souls by great faith.* Little faith cannot remove great difficulties. The disciples of Christ, in the days of his flesh, were fully convinced of this, when he said unto them, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."—Luke xvii. 3-5. The Apostles evidently felt that they had not faith enough to remove so great a difficulty as that of forgiving a trespassing brother seven times a day, therefore they prayed for an increase of faith, that they might be equal to such an emergency. It is a fact that is capable of the strongest proof that a weak faith will not bring us through every difficulty. Look at Peter on the water; his faith is weak, it fails him, he begins to sink. Look at him again in the judgment hall; he had not faith enough to enable him to confess his Master's name before his Master's enemies, and therefore he denies him with oaths and curses. Every Christian is at times placed in circumstances of great difficulty. The temptations of satan, the opposition from ungodly men, the stumbling-blocks which are sometimes placed in the way by near relations, the errors we are liable to fall into through ignorance, and the trials we have to endure in consequence of afflictions of body or afflictions in the family circle, make, at times, our road through life hilly, rough, and thorny; and great faith is requisite, to enable us

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to hold on our way, without murmuring. The faith that will serve when the road is smooth and good, will not do for swamps, and corduroys, and stony mountains. The faith that will serve in the bright sunshine, will not do for the dark and pitiless storm: or, in other words, the faith that is sufficient for prosperity, is not sufficient for adversity; the faith that will sustain us in the midst of kind, sympathising, Christian friends, will not suffice when we are surrounded by a host of ungodly sinners. To pass through great difficulties, we need great faith.

If, therefore, great faith is absolutely requisite to enable us to overcome the great difficulties which obstruct our personal salvation, how much more is it needed in our efforts to save the souls of our fellow-men! There are hindrances in the way of their salvation, greater than those we now meet with in our pathway to bliss. In saving the souls of men, we have not only to contend against the powers of hell, and the hostile influences of the world; but we have to grapple with the ignorance, with the inclinations to evil, with the love of sin, with the dogged resolution not to be saved, and with the confirmed sinful habits of all those whom we seek to save. The hinderances we meet with, in striving to cast satan out of the hearts of sinners, and to destroy the armour in which he trusts, are not mole-hills, but gigantic mountains. These hinderances are frequently called mountains in the New Testament. In fact, difficulties of every kind were called mountains by the Jews. It was a proverbial form of speech among them to speak of removing mountains, when they only meant, by what they said, to remove or conquer great difficulties. A rooter up of mountains was a common epithet applied to any Rabbin who was an eminent and a learned man, capable of removing the difficulties which perplexed the unlearned.

In removing the hinderances to the salvation of souls, great faith is absolutely requisite. Little faith makes every mole-hill a mountain; but great faith sinks every mountain to a plain. Little faith sees a lion at every corner of the street; but great faith sees Jehovah with his hosts ready to crush every foe that opposes, and to remove every difficulty that hinders the salvation of immortal souls. Little faith keeps its eyes riveted upon the hinderances, and sees nothing but them; but great faith, after glancing at the huge mountain of difficulties, turns its eyes to the Captain of our Salvation, to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and triumphantly

cries—"Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain," and proceeds to seek the sinner's salvation: singing—

"Jesus, the name high over all,  
In hell, or earth, or sky!  
Angels and men before it fall;  
And devils fear and fly."

And its labours are crowned with success. Are these statements deemed fanatical? then Paul was a great fanatic; for speaking of the faith of the ancient worthies, he says, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (Of whom the world was not worthy:) They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."—Heb. xi. 33—38. If great faith in God cannot remove hindrances out of the way of the salvation of souls, how was it that it worked such wonders for the ancient worthies? Has faith changed, or has God changed? One or the other must be changed, if great faith will not remove great hindrances out of the way of the salvation of souls. Talk of the mountains of difficulty that lie in the way of our doing the will of God in the salvation of souls: they are mere sand-banks compared with the mountains which lay in the way of the ancient worthies doing the will of God. "Alps on alps" rose up before them; but by faith in God, they removed them, and did his blessed will. Great faith will remove all difficulties; and, therefore, we cannot err in praying from the heart with Charles Wesley:—

"Give me the faith that can remove  
And sink the mountain to a plain;  
Give me the child-like, praying love,  
Which longs to build thy house again:  
Thy love, let it my heart o'erpower,  
And all my simple soul devour."

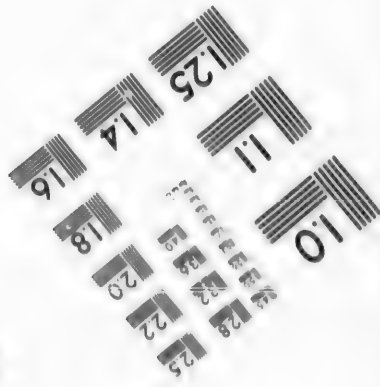
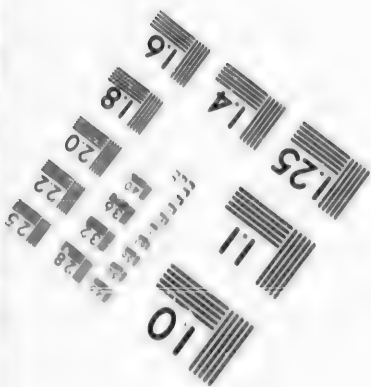
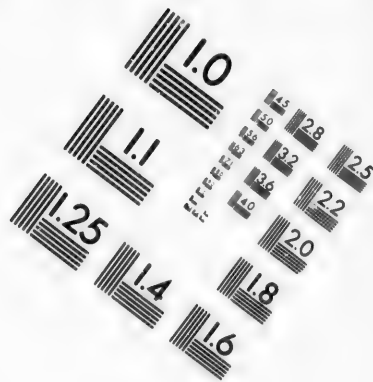
" O for a fervent, strong desire,  
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 To save poor souls out of the fire ;  
 To snatch them from the jaws of hell ;  
 And turn them to a pardoning God,  
 And quench the brands in Jesus' blood !"

*Great faith is essential to great success in saving souls, because without it we shall not attempt great things for God, nor expect great things from God.* Little faith makes cowards ; great faith makes heroes. " All things are possible to him that believeth," i. e., all things which God requires us to perform, can be accomplished by him that believeth. God requires us to attempt the salvation of souls, yea, to turn many to righteousness. He promises to succeed our efforts. Little faith doubts on this point, and prevents us from attempting to save souls. When we doubt the possibility of our saving souls, there is not much likelihood of our making the attempt. And if we did make the attempt, our unbelief would withhold God's blessing, so that we could do no good. When we discredit what God says, he is displeased with us ; for we dishonour him. We question his ability, or his willingness to save souls by us ; or else we doubt the faithfulness of God to perform for us what he has promised, and therefore He withholds his saving power. The doubting soul cannot expect God to save other souls by its efforts ; for Jesus says, " Let him ask in faith nothing wavering ; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord."

Great faith, on the contrary, leads out the believer to attempt great things for God, and to expect that God will do wonders by his efforts. The man that possesses a great faith in God may not have great intellectual power, may be conscious of his own ignorance, weakness, unworthiness, and may feel his utter insufficiency for saving souls ; but he feels also that his sufficiency is of God. In Christ he has wisdom, and strength, and righteousness ; and depending upon the Almighty Saviour, he reproves, rebukes, exhorts, and beseeches the sinners around him. Before long he finds one serious, another crying for mercy, and a third asking his way to Zion, with his face thitherward. Though after the flesh he is not wise, nor mighty, nor noble, yet he finds that, by his efforts, God contends the wise, the mighty, and the noble, and brings them to repentance and salvation. If you want to see the efficacy of great faith in saving souls—great faith exercised by an







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unlettered man, accomplishing wonders in the salvation of men, read the life of William Carvossa. There you will discover a hero, who, we doubt not, is now shining among the brightest stars in glory. Such was his faith in the ability and willingness of God to save souls, that with all the simplicity and confidence of a child he spoke to his fellows about their souls, pointed them to Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, and prayed for them in such a powerful manner, that few were not saved whose salvation he attempted. While reading his life, we have again and again thought if all Christians had his great faith, and attempted and expected the conversion of sinners as he did, the world would soon be converted; soon, very soon, would the earth be filled with the glory of God; and speedily would be heard, "Great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." If all Christians had a Carvossa's great faith, the possibility of the world's conversion would soon be no longer doubted, for it would be effected.

The Rev. John Thornton, of Darlington, in his tract on Christian Responsibility, says, "Some pious persons seem to consider the conversion of the world as connected with some change in the Divine administration. Let such individuals calmly submit the subject to a simple calculation to strengthen their faith, and it will then be manifest, that as it regards the means, nothing is wanting: all that is needed, apart from Divine influences, is *love to souls*. Is it too much to presume, if the church was in a vigorous state, and all its members knew their duty, and felt their responsibility, that, on an average, every Christian might be the means of converting one sinner every year? And estimating the number of genuine Christians at two hundred and fifty thousand, and stating the population of the globe in round numbers at one thousand millions, how long would it take to convert the world? Twelve years. This is demonstrated by an appeal to figures." There wants no change in the Divine administration to convert the world; but there wants a change in the faith of Christians to effect the work. The majority of Christians have such small faith in God, that they never attempt the conversion of a soul, and never expect the Lord to convert one by their efforts. They have such erroneous views of their duties to Christ and the souls of men, that they would probably shudder with horror if told that Christ expects them personally to labour for the salvation of immortal souls. Misc.

rably are all such deceived, and it will be a miracle if they save their own souls. When will this cursed, soul-destroying unbelief be rooted out of the church of God! When, oh! when will it be extirpated from the heart of every professed follower of Christ! Until it is destroyed, and the church, the whole church, has faith *in* God and the faith *of* God, the conversion of the world will be delayed to a remote period. But if all Christians had great faith in God, it would not take even twelve years to bring the whole world in willing bonds to the feet of Jesus. Great faith would never be satisfied with the conversion of only one soul a year. It would pant for more enlarged success. It would neither give God nor man any rest till all the sons of men were saved. On the grounds we have now stated, we affirm that GREAT FAITH IS ESSENTIAL TO GREAT SUCCESS IN SAVING SOULS, AND THAT IT IS THE IMPERATIVE DUTY OF EVERY ONE THAT NAMES THE NAME OF CHRIST TO HAVE, TO HOLD, AND TO EXERCISE SUCH FAITH IN GOD.

III. That the use of proper means will secure great faith in God.

It is no use expecting to obtain a faith like this without effort, and to preserve it without care. To obtain and retain great faith in God, we must use proper means, and give all diligence to secure and preserve this precious faith. The diligent hand maketh rich in temporal things; and diligence in the use of proper means will make us rich in faith.

*To have great faith in God, we must obtain a better acquaintance with him.* Just in proportion as we are acquainted with any man, shall we be disposed to place confidence in him. If we find, after a long and intimate acquaintance with a person, that he is intelligent, judicious, kind-hearted, and trustworthy, we shall place unbounded confidence in him. So it is in reference to Jehovah. Those who are best acquainted with God, place the greatest confidence in him. The Psalmist plainly states this fact in these words: "The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in the times of trouble, And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken those who seek thee."—Psalm ix. 9, 10. Paul utters similar language—"I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to his trust against that day."—2 Tim. i. 13. Those who are acquainted with the nature, perfections, works, and ways of God, which his

name imports, and who have found him faithful to the trust reposed in him, will exercise great faith in God. Those who have little faith in God, must have a very imperfect acquaintance with him. By reading God's holy word, by meditation on his matchless perfections, by close and constant communion with him, and by a frequent review of his dealings with his people, and with our own souls, let us obtain a better acquaintance with Him; and then we shall certainly increase our faith in God.

*To obtain and preserve great faith in God, we must obtain more of the Spirit's influences.* He is called the Spirit of faith. Faith is said to be of the operation of God. Among the fruits of the Spirit, enumerated in the fifth of Galatians, faith holds a distinguished place. The Holy Spirit is termed the Spirit of faith; because he gives to the soul both the will and the power to believe what God says. The Spirit does not exercise faith for us by any means; but he so reveals God and Christ to the soul,—gives us such commanding and overpowering evidence of the ability, and willingness, and faithfulness of both the Father and the Son to perform what is promised in the Holy Scripture, that we feel, at such times, we could as soon doubt our own existence, as doubt the fulfilment of the exceeding great and precious promises of revelation. It is in this way, too, that we should seek an increase of faith by prayer. We must not expect faith to be dropped down from heaven into our hearts in answer to prayer; but we should expect it by an increase of light and power, which the Spirit of God alone can impart. The senseless controversy about praying for faith has done much harm; and, if any were simpletons enough, they might carry on just such another controversy about praying for love, or joy, or peace, or long-suffering, or gentleness, or goodness, or meekness, or temperance; for faith is placed along with them as the fruit of the Spirit. Praying for faith is nothing more and nothing less than praying for that light and power which will annihilate every doubt, and fill the soul with full confidence in God. To pray for faith in this manner, is just as proper, as rational, as scriptural as praying for love, or any other grace of the Spirit. The apostles prayed for an increase of faith, and Christ did not reprove them for so doing; nor did he show them the impropriety of such a prayer, which he undoubtedly would have done, had there been any thing wrong in their prayer. However, we hold no controversy

with any on this point. By earnest prayer become full of the Spirit, and you will have great faith in God.

*To obtain and retain great faith in God, use the faith you already possess.* It is by exercise that the powers of the human body are invigorated. Paul says that is by reason of use that the senses are exercised to discern both good and evil. All will allow that our physical organs are strengthened, and our intellectual faculties are expanded by exercise. Why then should not our faith in God be increased by the same means? By believing in God for one promised blessing, and receiving it, we are encouraged to try again, and believe for another; and by a few successful trials of faith, in the promises of God, we shall become so strong in faith that we shall be able to believe all that the Lord has spoken. In the nineteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel, Christ says, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you." The similitude between faith and the mustard seed does not consist in the smallness of the mustard seed, and the smallness of the faith, but in the increasing, thriving property of the mustard seed, and the thriving faith which removes mountains. Botanists all speak in the highest terms of the fertility of the mustard seed; and if we had a faith that would increase and thrive as the mustard seed does, we should have faith equal to every difficulty and sufficient for every duty. We, however, have introduced this comparison of the Saviour's, not to show the resemblance between the mustard seed and faith; but to ask whether a grain of mustard seed would grow, and increase, and become a tree in which the birds of the air could lodge, if kept in a bag in the cupboard? We trow not. It must be put into properly prepared ground, and then it will vegetate and grow. And you may pray for great faith all the days of your lives, but you will never obtain it unless you use the faith you now possess.

*To obtain and retain great faith in God, you must become well acquainted with the promises of the Bible.* The reason why many sincere Christians have so little faith, is because they do not know what promises the Bible contains, or they do not ponder them sufficiently. In order to get a strong and an increasing faith in God, we must become familiar with the promises of the Divine Word. We cannot believe in that of which we have no knowledge. There must be some report, some previous information, some truth to be believed, or we can-



not exercise faith at all. When pressing sinners to believe, we have often been asked, "What must I believe?" and we have had to give the information required. And so in the great work of saving souls, we must have a sufficient knowledge of the ability and willingness of God to save our fellow-men to the uttermost, to enable us to exercise great faith in their behalf. How narrow and anti-scriptural are the views of many Christians upon this all-important subject. We have met with few who believe that God is either able or willing to convince and convert sinners every Sabbath, or every time that public worship is attended to. On this subject we shall quote only one passage from God's word: "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."—Zeph. iii. 16, 17. Now, when we come together in the house of God, we expect, as believers, to be blessed by God: to be filled with peace, and love, and joy; but there is little expectation that the mighty God in the midst of us will there and then convince and convert sinners; and, hence, as Thomas Scott has it, "There is little wrestling with God for a blessing. There is a want of the spirit of prayer. Sometimes this may arise from a spirit of humility; but it is a mistaken humility. St. Paul was most humble, yet most earnest in prayer, most persevering, most importunate; and so he obtained a *fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*. This fulness means, for great numbers to be awakened and converted, as in the primitive times, and at intervals since." To have that great faith in God, which is essential to great success in saving souls, through the public ministry of the word, we must know how God acted in primitive times, and we must search out those declarations and promises contained in the word of God, which assure us that his word shall not return void, but shall accomplish the thing which he pleaseth; and the promises which hold out great blessings to united faith and prayer. Such is now the littleness of faith in many professors, that they expect no conversions at the regular or ordinary means of public worship, so that they are ever desponding, and their hands are ever slack. Look out the promises, and believe them, and plead them for the conversion of sinners, and you will soon see a shaking among the dry bones that are found in God's house, and soon see them clothed with

flesh, and the Spirit of God entering them, and making them to live to the glory of God.

*To obtain and retain that great faith in God, which is essential to success in saving souls, we must keep clear of all sin.* Sin is more destructive to faith than the vermin of the earth are to the precious seed which is sown in the ground. It will be impossible for us to have a vigorous, thriving faith, a faith which will grow exceedingly, if we live in the practice of any known sin, or if we cherish any secret faults. If we only regard iniquity in the heart, God will not hear our prayers; and where is the man who can confidently rely upon God for a blessing upon his efforts to save souls, who practices sin in his life, or cherishes sin in his heart? To exercise confidence in God, under such circumstances, is bold presumption—daring impiety.

The proper use of these means will as certainly bring us into the possession of that great faith in God, which is essential to success in saving souls, as ever believing in the blood of Christ brought us into a state of acceptance with God. Do you desire a faith like this, which will enable you to save many souls from death? Use these means, and great faith you shall both obtain and retain. If you do really desire this great faith, you will most certainly use the means now pointed out; for no man can truly desire that which he will not seek to obtain.

The state of the church and the world imperiously demand great faith on the part of the people of God. The church wants reviving, and the world wants converting; but we can do neither for the want of more faith. We are too apt to look at the coldness, formality, and worldliness of professors, and become discouraged; instead of bracing up every nerve, exercising a simpler and stronger faith in God, and being determined to have a revival in the church. We look at the enmity of sinners against God; at their love of pleasure, wealth, and honour; at their deceitfulness and desperate wickedness, and are ready to despair; instead of being the more resolutely bent on their conversion, and exercising the requisite faith in God to secure their conversion. If the church did not need reviving, and the world did not need converting, there would be no need for great faith in God to revive the church and save the world. The very reasons which some assign for not exercising great faith in God, are the very reasons why they ought to exercise faith of the most vigorous and persevering character.

We call upon you, therefore, who profess the religion of Jesus, to get rid of your unbelief,—to have faith in God, and the faith of God, that the church may be revived, and that sinners may be converted. Cease to doubt the truth, and power, and goodness of God. "Believe in the Lord, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." Think of the injury you are doing the world—think of the many souls, for whom Christ died, that you are keeping in a perishing condition by your unbelief. You are positively damming up the waters of health, and purity, and joy, and eternal life by your unbelief. How can you be so cruel to your fellow-men, so unjust to God, so unkind to Christ, so ungrateful to the Holy Spirit, as to do so? Have faith in God, and thus lift up the flood-gates of mercy upon your fellow-men; and let

"Salvation like a river flow,  
Abundant, free, and clear."

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## DISCOURSE XIV.

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### THE EXCELLENCY OF UNWEARIED ZEAL IN THE GREAT WORK OF SAVING SOULS.

"But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."—GALATIANS iv. 18.

Of all things in the world, false zeal and party zeal are the most injurious. False zeal causes men to regard their best friends as their worst enemies; and party zeal destroys every kindly feeling towards an opponent. False zeal caused the Jews to murder Christ; and party zeal caused the Galatians to count Paul their enemy, because he told them the truth.

When Paul preached the pure gospel to the Galatians at the first, they were so thankful for the preached word, and so full of love to the apostle, for having brought it unto them, that they received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus; yea, if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him. But, alas! a sad change has come over them: they have been listening to some false teachers, who tell them that they must mix Judaism with Christianity, if they would be saved—that the gospel, with all its light and purity, power and love, will not save them unless they are circumcised: they have embraced the pernicious theory: have become the zealous partisans of these false teachers; and now they count Paul, their father in Christ, their enemy. Such a change has passed over the Galatians, that now, instead of being ready to pluck out their own eyes and give them to Paul, on account of the love they bear him, they are well nigh ready to pluck out the eyes of the venerable apostle, because he will not countenance them in the belief of a lie. We have often witnessed similar things in the course of our own ministry.

In the context, Paul tenderly expostulates with the Galatians on the folly, wickedness, and danger of such a course, in these words: "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Ye

know how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not we'll; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."

Right zeal is supremely valuable, and ought to be diligently cultivated and constantly exhibited by every follower of Christ. We must not be dormant, because some are enthusiastic; we must not refuse to labour for the good of the cause of Christ, because many labour only to build up a party or sect, regardless of the interests of religion generally;—for it is good to be always zealously affected in good.

We propose to consider Christian zeal,

- I. In its characteristics.
- II. In its objects.
- III. In its excellency.
- IV. In its necessity.

- I. Let us glance at the characteristics of Christian zeal.

Zeal denotes in general a *vehement fervour*, or *heat* of the mind or affections, and so is applicable either in a good or bad sense. It is that ardent affection of the mind which causes us to use all the faculties of our souls, all the powers of our bodies, and all the means at our disposal, for the attainment of the object we desire. The best illustrations of zeal are found in the following passages of the word of God. Of king Hezekiah it is said, "In every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered."—2 Chron. xxxi. 21. Solomon says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."—Eccles. ix. 10. The Psalmist says, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."—Psalm. lxi. 9. At the well of Samaria, Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work."—John iv. 34. And in his sermon on the mount, he says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and

thirst after righteousness."—Matth. v. 6. These are the best illustrations of zeal that we have met with. When a thing is done with all the heart, regardless of all consequences; and when the thing we desire so engrosses our souls that we feel more anxiety about gaining it than we do to eat when hungry and drink when thirsty, then we manifest true zeal. As zeal is capable of being exhibited in a variety of ways, and may be manifested in seeking either good or bad things, we shall briefly point out the characteristics of Christian zeal.

*Christian zeal is enlightened and prudent.* Many have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. This was the case with the Jews, who thought they were doing God service by murdering his saints. This is the case with all who have a superstitious zeal, an idolatrous zeal, or a mere party zeal. This is not the case, however, with Christian zeal. It is zeal according to knowledge; zeal which blends the wisdom of the serpent, the harmlessness of the dove, and the courage of the lion, is Christian zeal. This zeal is founded upon right calculations—seeks only good, and that too by lawful and just means. Christian zeal is guided by the word of God, and not by the opinions of men; is regulated by reason and conscience, and not by fancy and feeling. Christian zeal never moves tongue, hand, nor foot, until there is a certainty that the object desired is just, and holy, and good in God's sight. Christian zeal never does evil that good may come: does not believe that the end sanctifies the means; but believes that wicked means to gain a good end will ruin for ever the soul that uses them. Christian zeal pays the strictest attention to the commands: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of."—Rom. xiii. 16. "Abstain from all appearance of evil."—1 Thess. v. 22. The disciples of Ignatius Lyola, who are called Jesuits, act on the principle that the end sanctifies the means. But no Christian can act on this principle; for the word of God says: "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just."—Rom. iii. 5—8. The damnation of those who do evil that good may come, is great, just, and certain. We can no more escape the damnation of hell, if

we do evil that good may come, than we can escape death. Would to God that all professors of religion would ponder this solemn fact; for, alas! there are Jesuits to be found in other churches besides the church of Rome. Bigotted, sectarian zeal makes every professor of religion a Jesuit in principle and action, though not in name, no matter to what section of the church of Christ he belongs. Christian zeal first ascertains that the object is *good*, and then seeks with all the heart, to gain it in that way and by these means which God can approve.

*Humility is another characteristic of Christian zeal.* The man who is full of Christian zeal uses no trumpet to proclaim his own goodness and set forth his zeal. Those who are actuated by the spirit, and who would not hesitate to use the language of Jehu, are destitute of Christian zeal. When a man, by words, or deeds, or looks, gives utterance to the language of Jehu—"Come see my zeal for the Lord God of hosts;" no matter how much he does for God, there is no Christianity in his zeal: in it there is nothing but selfishness. He does what he performs, ostensibly for God, merely to be seen of men and to gain their applauses: or else to serve some sinister purpose, which may not be apparent to men. Christian zeal pursues good, does good, promotes good, without boasting: gives, as is most justly due, the glory of all its achievements to the infinitely blessed God alone. The man who displays true Christian zeal, feels his ignorance, his weakness, his unprofitableness too sensibly, ever to boast of what he has done for God, and Christ, and the souls of men. Whatever he has accomplished by his zealous efforts in the cause of God, he feels that God imparted to him the wisdom and strength which made him successful in his works of faith, and labours of love, and all that he has done is little compared with what he owes the Lord. And after he has done all he can, truth forces him to acknowledge that he is an unprofitable servant. Besides, the most zealous servants of God see so much imperfection in all that they have done, that they frequently approach the throne of grace, in the spirit of zealous Nehemiah, who prayed, in reference to the great work he accomplished, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy." See the humility of Christian zeal, as exhibited in one or two eminently liberal and zealous saints. A lady applied to the late eminent philanthropist of Bristol, Richard Reynolds, on behalf of a little orphan boy. After he had given liberally, she said,



"When he is old enough, I will teach him to name and thank his benefactor." "Stop," said the good man, "thou art mistaken. We do not thank the clouds for rain. Teach him to look higher, and thank Him who giveth both the clouds and rain."

"On a visit to London," says the late Rev. J. Campbell, in a letter to a minister, "I was expressing a great desire to see the late Rev. T. Charles, of Bala, with whom I had corresponded for three years, concerning a remarkable revival which had taken place under his ministry. Mr. C. happening to be in town at the same time, your father kindly took me to Lady Ann Erskine's, where he resided. We spent there two happy hours. Your father requested Mr. C. to favour us with a brief outline of the circumstances which led to the remarkable revival at Bala and its surrounding region, its progress, etc. He did so for upwards of an hour. On our leaving him, your father said, 'Did you not observe the wonderful humility of Mr. C. in the narrative he gave? Never having once mentioned *himself*, though he was the chief actor and instrument in the whole matter.'"—Such is the humility of Christian zeal.

*Patience is another characteristic of Christian zeal.* The man who is impelled to do good by Christian motives, patiently labours to do good without peevishness, fretfulness, and murmuring. He keeps his end steadily and constantly in view. He fervently and frequently prays to God to give him his heart's desire. He relies implicitly on God for success. Watches diligently for every opportunity to secure the end. Labours with all his might to overcome the difficulties which stand between him and the realization of his wishes: and, then, he patiently waits till success crowns his efforts, or till he can no longer hope for success. And if he fails, he is neither discouraged nor vexed; but having the consciousness of purity of motive, of a desire to glorify God and save souls, he consoles himself with the precious thought given by Isaiah: "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." Christian zeal is not affrighted by danger, nor fretted by opposition, nor tired by difficulty, nor destroyed by failure; under all circumstances it pursues its even course, while life, and health, and being last. How admirably was patience exhibited in the zealous career of the Lord Jesus. In his zeal there was no impatience. He was often grieved at the blindness, unbelief, and obstinacy of sinners: he marvelled at these

things: he frequently wept over the miseries that awaited men, which he came to prevent, but which they would not allow him to save them from; yet, he did not for one moment stay in his course, but patiently travelled on till he gained the glorious end for which he was made flesh. Poverty, reproach, and persecution, were his almost constant attendants, yet he continued to go "about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." In him, zeal was so admirably tempered with patience, that the assaults of hell—the indignities heaped upon him by men—the agonies of Gethsamane—the horrors of Calvary—the withdrawal of divine support and consolation even upon the cross, could not shake his purpose of accomplishing the work given him to do. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."—Isaiah liii. 7. And if our zeal must be called Christian zeal, it must be like that exhibited by Christ. "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ has suffered for us, leaving an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."—1 Peter ii. 21—23.

*Charity is another characteristic of Christian zeal.* It is neither bigotted nor furious; but catholic and gentle. It is easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits. It overcomes opposition, not by scurrilous jests, bitter sarcasms, and brute force arguments; but by truth, persuasion, and love. Christian zeal will show the truth, the justice, the reasonableness of the things which it aims to secure;—will earnestly persuade opposers to cease their opposition, and seek, or let others seek, the things which are true, honest, just, lovely, and of good report;—will make a liberal use of that charity which heaps fire on the heads of the enemies of the cross of Christ, which melts their iron hearts, converts them into the friends of Jesus, and makes them fellow-labourers in the glorious cause we have espoused. Bigotted zeal, furious zeal, mere sectarian zeal, are as opposite to Christian zeal as light is opposite to darkness. Bigotted and sectarian was the zeal of the disciples of Christ, when "John answered, and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us." A sorry reason, truly, to forbid a man casting

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out devils in the name of Jesus, "because he followeth not us." Did the Saviour commend this bigotted sectarian zeal of his disciples? Verily not: he condemned their conduct in the strongest terms. "But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us, is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of cold water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."—Mark ix. 38—42. Hear this, all ye uncharitable bigots, who profess the name of Jesus, and who, in your sectarian zeal, are continually offending the little ones who believe in Christ, belonging to other sections of his church to that with which you are connected, it would be better for you if millstones were hung about your necks, and you were cast into the sea. And why so? because your bigotry does harm to the cause of Christ, and, if not removed, will shortly cast you into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Furious and cruel was the zeal of two of the disciples of Christ, on another occasion, recorded by the evangelist Luke: "And they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."—Luke ix. 52—56. All those who would force the religion of Christ upon men, or who would force their peculiar views of religion upon others, or else make them suffer pains, penalties, or death for their refusal, manifest true Mahomettan zeal, (for by fire and sword does Mahomet preach his religion); but they are utterly destitute of Christian zeal. Christian zeal is ever catholic, and ever kind. Of Christian zeal it may be truly said, "It suffereth long, and is kind; it envieth not; it vaunteth not; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Such is Christian zeal. It is

not that ignorant and imprudent, proud and impatient, sectarian and furious thing which many imagine it to be, and which, with some professors, passes current as Christian zeal. Ah, no ! Christian zeal is just like the zeal which Christ exhibited when on earth. It is intelligent and prudent, humble, patient, and charitable. Unless we have a zeal like Christ's, we are destitute of Christian zeal.

Consider,

## II. The objects of Christian zeal.

The text says, " It is good to be zealously affected always in good." The objects of Christian zeal are good, pre-eminently good. Christian zeal never can seek anything which is bad. Among the objects of Christian zeal, the following are paramount :—

*The glory of God.* This is the first and the highest object of Christian zeal. The Christian being *very jealous* of the honour of the Lord God of hosts, is *very zealous* in promoting the Divine glory among men. Christian zeal induces its possessor to glorify God in his body and spirit, which are his : to do all that he does to the glory of God. The Christian lives to induce men to admire and extol the grace of God which is in him. Christian zeal causes a man to labour, and pray, and give, to induce the men of the world to believe that he is concerned for the Divine glory ; and to induce them, if possible, to keep God's laws, to reverence his name, to attend his worship, to serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, that he may be glorified. Christian zeal kindly reproves men when they blaspheme God's holy name, when they break his Sabbaths, when they violate the laws of truth, justice, honesty, and love, which he has given for the observance of men, in their intercourse with each other : earnestly exhorts men to attend to the worship of God, to believe the Gospel of his Son, to submit to the strivings of his Spirit, and to be saved by his glorious grace, that they may be to the praise of his glory : tenderly beseeches men to be reconciled to God, and give unto him the glory that is due unto his name. When unsuccessful, Christian zeal sighs and cries over the abominations which are done in the land ; in secret places weeps over the pride, unbelief, and hardness of heartedness of sinners ; and fervently cries, " O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." The Christian hears the voice of the Saviour, saying, "*Herein is my Father glorified,*

*that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples."* Believing this, he zealously labours to render to God the fruit of his lips, the love of his heart, and the obedience of his life ; and seeks, with untiring zeal, to cultivate a portion of the barren wilderness in which he is placed ; that the wilderness may be turned into a fruitful field, yielding " the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God."

*Another preeminent object of Christian zeal is to extend the knowledge of the Saviour, and multiply the triumphs of his cross.* Christian zeal is supremely anxious that Christ should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, in the universal destruction of Satan's kingdom, and in the universal establishment of " The kingdom of God," which " is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Christians know that the knowledge of the Saviour is absolutely needed, to effect this most desirable object : know that the cross must be uplifted, its banners unfurled in every land, before the nations either will or can flock to Christ as doves to their windows ; and before he " shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."--See Isaiah, chapter 11. Christian zeal ardently desires the period to arrive, when in every country " They shall sit every man," with a copy of the Holy Scriptures in his hand, " under his vine and under his fig tree ; and none shall make them afraid:" earnestly longs to hear of the Gospel exerting its almighty power in every family ; influencing each heart, ruling each tongue, regulating each life, so that all the habitations of men may become the abodes of peace and joy, harmony and love : yea, it cannot rest until Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, shut up, and a seal set upon him, that he may deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled, spoken of by the Revelator : Christian zeal cannot give up its labours till all the sons of men, delivered from the guilt, the bondage, the pollution, the curse of sin, and the tyranny of satan, are found believing in Christ, loving Christ, and rejoicing in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. To gain these blessed ends, Christian zeal devises liberal things, and vigorously supports those noble institutions which have for their object the destruction of Satan's empire, and the subjugation of the world to Christ, whose right it is to reign, over all human hearts, from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

*Another paramount object of Christian zeal, inseparably connected with the glory of God and the triumphs of the cross of Christ, is the present and eternal welfare of man.* Christian zeal seeks the amelioration of man's temporal sorrows. It cannot (because Christianity was never designed to) remove those physical evils to which flesh is heir, and those mental woes which flow therefrom; but they are softened and lessened by its enterprises. Christian zeal provides and supports, in Christian lands, hospitals for the sick; asylums for the insane, the blind, the deaf and dumb; houses where the guilty creatures who have left the paths of virtue may resort, if they desire to reform; Sabbath schools, yea, even day schools, for the education of the children of the poor; Dorcas societies, for the clothing of the naked; temperance societies, for the reformation of drunkards; and moral reform societies, for the reformation of manners. It supplies, also, refreshment to the hungry, makes the widow rejoice, and the orphan glad. It sympathises with the sufferer, visits the afflicted in their afflictions, and administers consolation to the dying. Time would fail us if we were to attempt to describe all the temporal good which Christian zeal does for man.

But Christian zeal, while it does not by any means overlook man's temporal welfare, especially seeks the spiritual and eternal good of mankind. The present and eternal salvation of man is peculiarly the object of Christian zeal. It aims at instructing the ignorant in the knowledge of God; delivering them from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: turning them from sin to holiness, from the power of Satan unto God, from the broad road that leads to destruction, into the narrow way which leadeth unto life. Christian zeal, contemplating man as a fallen, ruined creature, endeavours to raise him up, and restore him to the favour and image of God: contemplating him as a diseased and dying creature, runs to him with the precious balm of the Gospel, and beseeches him to use it, that he may be restored to health, and live forever: contemplating him as a guilty, enslaved creature, doomed to perpetual horrors and eternal thralldom, it blows the trumpet, and sends to him the joyful sound of pardon and liberty, that he may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in Christ: contemplating him as a polluted creature, who cannot live with God and angels if not puri-

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fed by the blood of the Lamb, it directs his attention to the fountain opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In a word, Christian zeal beholds the human race going down to the bottomless pit, and knowing that nothing but the cross of Christ can save them from that horrible pit, it rushes, with the cross uplifted, into the way of sinners, and cries, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Its object being to save the souls of men from endless woe, and to bring them to the possession of eternal life, it supports a Gospel Ministry, Bible Societies, Tract Societies, Missionary Societies, and Sabbath Schools, for the express purpose of placing the cross of Christ in every land, to save men from sin, death, and hell, and to bring them to holiness, life, and heaven. And not only so, but Christian zeal prompts its possessors, old and young, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, male and female, to put forth individual effort, to gain the same blessed object. Christian zeal not only appropriates money, but gives prayers, talents, influence, labour, time, body and soul, to secure the same great object; and thinks itself amply repaid if God is glorified, Christ satisfied, and man saved, by all its efforts.

Consider,

### III. The excellency of unwearied Christian zeal.

"But it is good to be zealously affected always in good." The most burning zeal, if only occasional, is of little worth; but unwearied zeal is of great value. Paul does not say "It is good to be zealously affected in good;" but he says, "It is good to be zealously affected ALWAYS in good." Continued Christian zeal is excellent,

*Because it is consistent with the Christian profession.* As Christians, we profess that we are not our own. Having been purchased with a price the most astonishing, even with the precious blood of Christ, we profess to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his. We profess to live not unto ourselves; but unto him who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. We profess to seek not merely our own good, but the welfare of our fellow-men. Therefore, while it is inconsistent in us, and disgraceful to us, to belie our professions, by apathy in the work of God, in the cause of Christ, and in the salva-



tion of souls, it is good, very good to be *always* zealously affected toward those great objects we profess to seek. Unwearied zeal is in exact accordance both with the spirit and the letter of our covenant engagements. We, as Christians, have entered into a perpetual covenant with God, which must never be forgotten. We have solemnly, deliberately, and of our own free will taken God for our Father, Christ for our master, the Holy Spirit for our guide. We have promised and covenanted with Almighty God, that, if he will bestow upon us grace and glory, we will give him our ~~t~~ <sup>lives</sup>, our souls, our all; and that we will work, and think, and speak for God, as long as we live. When we were converted, and took the Lord to be our God, and united with his people, we said in *deed*, if not in *word*,—

"Lord, in the strength of grace,  
With a glad heart, and free,  
Myself, my residue of days,  
I consecrate to thee.

Thy ransomed servant, I  
Restore to thee thy own;  
And from this moment live or die,  
'To serve my God alone."

If, therefore, we are not unwearied in our efforts to do the will of God, to advance the cause of Christ, and save the souls of men, we are COVENANT BREAKERS. Every man breaks his covenant with God who is not *always* zealously affected in good. This is very wicked. But when we are unwearied in our zeal, we are acting up to our covenant engagements, and both God and man must approve of our conduct.

Continued Christian zeal manifests that singleness of intention, that honesty of purpose, that rectitude of principle, that invincible courage, and that indomitable perseverance which command not only the admiration of the wise and the good, but calls forth the eulogiums of the ignorant and the wicked. The bitterest opponents of Wesley and Whitfield were struck with admiration at their heroic and constant zeal; and the greatest haters of *Methodism* have been lavish in their praises of the *zeal of the Methodists*. That eminent and pious divine, Dr. Chalmers, who had a soul too large, and a love to Christ too fervent, not to admire the efforts put forth by Christians of other persuasions, to save the souls of men, was so struck with the unwearied zeal of the Methodists, that he gave to Methodism the designation of "Christianity in

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earnest." Unwearied zeal in the cause of God is *so good* that it will ever command the *esteem* of the wise and good, and the *admiration* of the ignorant and vicious.

Unwearied zeal shows the resolute determination of the soul to do the will of God, and act up to our profession, whatever may be the reproaches and persecutions that may await us for so doing; and this shows that we are zealous not to please men, but to please God, who trieth the heart. Occasional zeal, like that of the Galatians, when some of God's zealous servants are with us, animating us both by word and deed, shows a desire to please them; but zeal continued when they are absent, when difficulties are great, when enemies are numerous, and when temptations are heavy, gives such proof of heartfelt love to God, complete devotedness to Christ, and genuine concern for the souls of men, that he that is zealous of good under such circumstances is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Such zealous efforts are not *eye service*, but *heart service*, and stamp the character with consistency. Unwearied Christian zeal is excellent,

*Because it produces the most beneficial and lasting results.*

It gives men a just conception, and an exalted opinion of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unwearied zeal gives the world an excellent and impressive example of the power of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. It causes men to see, and to feel, and to acknowledge the beauty, the force, the value, the desirableness, and the necessity of genuine religion. Hundreds who are wandering in the paths of sin, misery, and death, would soon turn their feet unto God's testimonies, if all who make a profession of religion were zealously affected always in good; for they would then be forced to feel that there is a reality in religion—that Christians really believe there is a God, a Saviour, a heaven, a hell, a judgment, an eternity: that they firmly believe, that without repentance, faith, and holiness, men must be damned to all eternity: that Christians do really possess the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the communion of the Holy Spirit, and a good hope through grace of eternal life. Let these impressions be produced upon the minds of sinners, by the unwearied zeal of God's children, and then the most careless will soon be awakened, the most trifling will soon become serious, the most profligate will soon be ashamed, and the most hardened and stubborn sinners will

soon begin to yield, and cry, "Men, brethren, what must we do?"

But when sinners see professors generally cold, and unconcerned, and worldly: only occasionally acting and speaking as if they believed all that the Scriptures contain is true, they think that religion is a fable, and that those who *profess* it do not *believe* it; therefore, the unconverted remain asleep in their sins, dream that all is well, and mutter in their sleep "Peace and safety: then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."—1 Thess. v. 3. Souls are ruined by the want of continued earnestness and zeal on the part of the professed people of God. Let all in the Church of God, or any section of the Church, live as it becometh the Gospel, and continually manifest true Christian zeal for the salvation of souls, and a change will soon take place in the conduct of sinners, who witness this marked change in believers; for continued zeal would bring them to their senses, and crowds of them to the cross, to obtain salvation through faith in the blood of its victim. When in the city of Montreal, we were conversing one day with the late Rev. Caleb Strong, who at that time had a gracious revival progressing in his church, we asked him, "To what cause do you attribute your revival?" His remark we can never forget, for he replied, "To the increased earnestness and zeal of my members, who have become more concerned for their own souls and the souls of others." This is just what is wanted, to increase religion in the church and in the world. Let all who profess religion be in earnest to make their own calling and election sure, and continuously labour for the salvation of others, and speedily the salvation of our God shall be known to all men, in all nations. Viewed in this light, continued Christian zeal is unspeakably good. For the want of it, many perish. How many perish through the lukewarmness of the professors of religion the day of judgment alone can reveal! Unwearied Christian zeal is good,

*For it ensures a great reward.* It will give us the satisfaction arising from well-meant endeavours, and save us from all the bitter remorse and unavailing regrets which are ever occasioned by neglect of duty. This is no small reward; for "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear." Casper Schade, when dying, said, "I must cry and preach repentance while there is yet a gasp of breath in me. Oh! if I had but cried

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louder when I was in the pulpit, than I might now forbear it." Many who do not fill the pulpit are continually filled with remorse through not zealously labouring for the glory of God, the satisfaction of Christ, and the salvation of the souls of men. You, by your lukewarmness, are not only now destroying your peace, but you are making sad work for repentance on a dying bed. Your want of zeal will then stare you in the face, and reprove you ; and your lukewarmness will correct you in your last hours. Be zealous, and repent, that your death-bed may feel soft, as downy pillows are. We say, then, unwearied zeal is good, is truly excellent, if it only save us from those *living regrets* and *dying regrets* which those must endure who are not always zealously affected in good.

Continued zeal will render you, to some extent, successful in doing good. That success will afford you solid satisfaction and exquisite joy. " Alexander, emperor of Russia, was once successful in saving a life, and he expressed the day on which the event occurred as the happiest of his life." The salvation of souls from death will afford you far more joy, both in life and in death, in time and in eternity, than Alexander felt in saving a fellow-mortal from temporal death. It is impossible for you to labour in vain, and spend your strength for nought, if you are always zealously affected in good. Souls will be saved by your zealous efforts. If *all* do not turn to God for whose salvation you labour, *some* most assuredly will ; for " Ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." " They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." You know, also, so much of the value of the soul as to cause you individually to say, with the Rev. Joseph Livingstone, " If but one soul—but one soul, O my God ! be saved by my efforts, I envy not the monarch's crown." Success in doing good will make your cup to run over : it will fill you with joy in time and in eternity.

And allowing that you could be invariably unsuccessful in your attempts to do good to the souls of men ; yet, " God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and labour of love." Success is not the rule with God in the bestowment of spiritual blessings here, and the honours of glory hereafter. Jehovah is guided in bestowing these inestimable gifts by our motives, our desires, the extent and constancy of our labours. Success does not lie with us : we have no control

over that, excepting so far as our efforts are needed to secure it; for, after the most patient, laborious, and protracted effort, sinners may possibly refuse to be saved. But we have to do with our motives, desires, efforts; and if these are what they should be—spiritual, extensive, unwearied, God will pour the richest blessings into our souls here, and give us a crown of righteousness hereafter. The faithfulness of God, in rewarding his zealous servants, is found in innumerable promises in his word: and even wicked men have wished, toward the close of life, that they had served him faithfully, making the confession that he would not have forsaken them, as the mortals did whom they served. Cardinal Wolsey, one of the most eminent of British statesmen, poured forth his feelings in his last days in these memorable words, “Had I been as vigilant to serve my God, as I have been to please my king, he would not have forsaken me now, in my grey hairs.” Zealously, constantly labour for God, and he will never leave you, and never forsake you. You shall have a constant sense of his high approbation; his abundant blessings will daily enrich your souls; his presence will ever cheer your hearts in life; and when your heart and your strength fail you, he will be the rock of your heart, and your portion forever. How truly excellent is unwearied Christian zeal, seeing that it cannot by any possibility lose its reward.

Consider,

#### IV. The necessity of unwearied Christian zeal.

*Unwearied zeal is necessary to secure the objects which we wish to gain.* Unless we are always zealously affected in good, we cannot greatly promote the divine glory, nor do much toward extending the triumphs of the cross, nor materially benefit the human race. The efforts of satan and his emissaries are unwearied. The arch-enemy of God and man never tires. He, “as a roaring lion, *walketh about*, seeking whom he may devour.” For near six thousand years he has been engaged in the wretched business of ruining the immortal souls of men; and at this moment he is as busy as ever, marshalling his hosts, and directing the powers of darkness in their cruel and interminable war against God and man. His agents, who belong to our race, are indefatigable in their exertions to keep their fellow-creatures in darkness, misery, and death. They leave no stone unturned, no means untried, no energy unemployed. The pulpit, the platform, and the press are by no means confined to the cause of truth, of God,

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of Christ, and of man's dearest interests. These are employed in the devil's cause, as well as in God's. Therefore, if we wish to succeed in our Christian enterprises, we must be always zealously affected in good. Satan and his emissaries are constantly striving to thwart our purposes, to prevent us from doing good, and to destroy the good already accomplished by Christian zeal. If we relax in our exertions, he will gain the advantage over us, and destroy what we have wrought. We can only hold fast the good already gained by a continuance of our zeal in doing good. It does not require a Solomon to see that if Christians were to relax their efforts, the world would soon go back to the miserable condition it was in during the dark ages. Let the church cease to keep up the public worship of God;—let the mouths of the too few faithful ministers of the gospel be closed;—let the Bible, and Tract, and Sunday School institutions cease their operations;—let the various missionary societies recall their missionaries, dismiss their collectors, and break up their organizations;—let no effort be made to convert the world: and whose pen can write—whose voice can utter—whose heart can imagine the fearful condition of our world in twenty years from this day! The world is bad enough now, with all the institutions and efforts of Christian zeal; but it would be inconceivably worse then. Let the devil and his angels, and his human emissaries, have their own way in this world, without any opposition for twenty years, and it would become as Sodom and like unto Gomorrah, and would, in all probability, call down by its sins—there not being ten righteous souls to preserve it—fire and brimstone from the Lord in heaven, to consume it. The zeal of Christians, even now, prevents its total darkness and corruption, and we think we may safely add, its total destruction. See ye not then, in this respect, the need of unwearied zeal?

Besides, the very beings whom we wish to bring to glorify God, to bring into the church of Christ, and raise to heaven, can only be saved by our persevering efforts. Sinners in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred resist us, stoutly resist us at first, when we seek to pull them out of the fire. Many of them would scare us by reproach, and ridicule, and persecution; but these things must not be minded, if we would save them. If they perceive that we begin to relax in our efforts, they will only become the more determined to live in sin. Our continued zeal, exhibited in constant kindness, unwearied entreaties, and untiring labours, will, in the end,



prevail with most. The unwearied efforts of a Christian man or woman produce the reflection in the sinner's heart: "I must be in a dangerous situation, or that person would not be at so much pains with me, after all the rebuke I have given. My soul must be precious, religion must be supremely valuable, or that good person would not be at so much and such constant trouble to induce me to care for my soul, and to seek religion." Ignatius Loyola\* knew better how to conquer the human heart than thousands of Christians do. Francis Xavier was a gay courtier, devoted to pleasure, when Loyola first met with him in Paris; but Loyola, seeing in him, under a gay and frivolous exterior, a resolute, determined and persevering man, was determined to have him a member of his order. He got into his society, attracted his attention, gained his affections, and then whenever he was in his company he never left Xavier without saying unto him, in the language of Christ, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Loyola gained his object, and Xavier became one of the most devoted, heroic, and successful missionaries that the popish church has ever had. When shall we learn the simple truth, that perseverance will overcome every difficulty. There is not so much need for flaming zeal, as there is for patient, unwearied zeal. The waters wear the stones. How? By one impetuous dash? Ah, no! but by their continual flowing over them. When very young, we often stood and watched the stone-masons sawing through the huge granite stones used for building; we saw a small vessel of water so fixed that the water kept dropping into the place where the saw was moving, and with the small quantity of water which the little vessel contained, they were able, with ease, to saw through the hardest and thickest stones. Had they thrown pailfuls on at once, it would have been of no service; but the continual dropping of the water from the little vessel did the thing required. And if we are to be successful in doing good, we must not be zealous, very zealous, occasionally, but we must be always zealously affected in good.

*Unwearied zeal is necessary, because the objects we seek are not near gained as yet.* The God, whose we are and whom we serve, is dishonoured at this moment by the great majority of the human race. "It is sad to think," says the pious Matthew Henry, "how empty the earth is of the glory of

\* The founder of the order called the order of Jesus or Jesuits.

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God ; how little service and honour he has from a world to which he is such a bountiful benefactor." The kingdom of Christ only includes, as yet, a minority of the human race—the major part of mankind belong to satan. Millions know nothing of the Saviour's name—the Saviour's precious love. Misery meets us on every hand. We have relieved a few miserable objects by money, or by considerate and kind acts, which are more valuable than money ; but there are numbers more needing our aid. We may have saved a few souls from death, but there are numbers more, with whom we are acquainted, who still are under the curse of God's holy law, and who imperatively need our most zealous efforts to pluck them from the burning. Can we sit down then at ease, and take our rest ? These facts say emphatically, No.

Much has been done ; thousands upon thousands have been saved, through the individual and united efforts of God's people ; but still, there are hundreds, thousands, millions, yea, hundreds of millions more who need turning from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God. Can we cease our exertions, fold our arms, and seek our repose, while the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty ?—while paganism exists with all its sickening impurities, and with all its horrid barbarities ?—while the Alcoran of Mahomet is still extant, and thousands of his followers are expecting his return, and a heaven of sensual bliss ?—while the Jews still retain their deep-rooted prejudices, and reject our glorious Messiah ?—while millions in the nations of Christendom are living without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world ? With these facts before us, does it become us, as a portion of the sacramental host of God's elect, to furl our banners, throw down our weapons, and cease to fight, as though the battle were won and the conquest achieved. Ah, no ! Rise ye men and women of God, gird on your armour, concentrate your energies, go forth in the name of your God, and never think of ceasing your zealous labours till Christ's reign becomes as extensive as the globe ; till every man, woman, and child, in the wide world, is found sitting at the feet of Jesus, and ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb. Cease our efforts while there are hundreds in this town unconverted, going down to hell ? We must not think of such a thing ; but girding up the loins of our minds, we must redouble our efforts, and save some of them from eternal woe.

Some relax their efforts because there is so much to be

done, and because so little is accomplished ; but these thoughts ought not to damp our zeal. A converted Jew, pleading the cause of the society through whose instrumentality he had been brought to a knowledge of Christianity, was opposed by a learned gentleman, who spoke very lightly of the objects of the society and its efforts, and said, "He did not suppose they would convert more than a hundred all together." "Be it so," replied the Jew ; "you are a skilful calculator ; take your pen now, and calculate the worth of one hundred immortal souls !" This Jew's heart was right, and he gave the proper answer to one who could oppose and sneer at a society that he thought might save one hundred immortal souls. We may not see so much good done as we could desire, but if any souls are saved through our zealous labours, the good accomplished is both incalculable and interminable. If we are not always zealously affected in good, none may be saved ; but if we are unwearied in our efforts, we shall save some. And the salvation of one soul will more than compensate for all the toils, the privations, and the anxieties of one short life. This thought influenced the mind of one of the American missionaries, Mr. Cox, who, a short time before he sailed for Africa, visited the university at Middletown. In conversation with one of the students, he said, "If I die in Africa, you must come after me, and write my epitaph." To which the other replied, "I will ; but what shall I write ?" "Let a thousand missionaries die before Africa be given up," was the reply. In this spirit he died, and in this spirit all Christians should both live and die.

*Unwearied zeal in doing good is necessary to the continuance of our own personal piety, and to our eternal safety.* There are professors who can comprehend an argument drawn from personal motives better than any drawn from other sources. This last thought, therefore, on the necessity of unwearied zeal in the cause of God, and Christ, and human souls, we trust will have the desired effect, if nothing else will, of causing us all to be zealously affected always in good. Our own souls are staked on the continuance of our zeal in the cause of God. Our piety can only be secured by our unwearied efforts to do good. Heaven depends, more than numbers imagine, on persevering zeal. Unconcern for God's glory, carelessness about the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, indifference to the eternal welfare of immortal souls, displeases God, wounds Christ, grieves the Spirit ; will cause the Father to forsake us, the Son to deny us, the Holy Spirit

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to fight against us. Barren fig-trees are sometimes cursed at once, and they wither in a day. Barren fig-trees are sometimes spared for a year, at the intercession of the vine-dresser, until more means are used to make them fruitful; but the vine-dresser himself declares that they shall be cut down at the end of the year, if they bring forth no fruit. But we have plain, positive proof that men will lose their religion and be cast off by Christ if they become lukewarm. The Laodæceans became lukewarm; they lost their zeal, and were indifferent about the glory of God, the triumphs of Christ, the salvation of souls: and Jesus therefore plainly tells them that he will cast them off. His words are, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." But not wishing to punish them with eternal damnation, he gives them an opportunity to recover his justly forfeited favour; hence, he says, "Be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with me." He has left the heart for their lukewarmness: this is a dreadful evil. But he stands at the door: this is a great mercy. They may yet be saved; but only on the condition of their becoming zealous, repenting of their past lukewarmness, hearing Christ's voice, and opening the door. On these conditions, and on these alone, will Jesus return to their hearts. If they reject them, they are for ever undone. Christ is the same now as he was when he revealed his displeasure against the Laodæceans to John the divine in the isle of Patmos. He is as much displeased with lukewarmness in us, as he was with the lukewarmness in the Laodæceans; and he will as certainly cast us off, as he did them, if we are guilty of the same sin. If Christ cast us out, our piety will wither and die as quickly as Jona's gourd did, which perished in a night; yea, as quickly as the barren fig-tree did, which Jesus cursed: "The next day it was dried up from the roots." So will it be with our piety, if we cease to be zealous. And when our piety is gone, we cannot go to heaven; for it is written, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Such are the reasons by which unwearied Christian zeal is enforced upon our attention and practice.

What shall we say more to cause you to be zealously affected always in good? Shall we remind you of past indifference? It has been great. Do you feel that you have not

done what you could and what you might for the glory of God, the cause of Christ, the salvation of souls? Has Christ left your heart in consequence of your sinful apathy? Then be zealous and repent; for he has not left the door; he stands knocking; and if you will be zealously affected always in good in future, he will return to your sorrowful hearts, and restore to you the joy of his salvation.

Do you, my hearers, really desire God to be glorified, Christ's cause to triumph, and souls to be saved? then you must be zealous, and always zealous, in seeking these glorious objects. And what objects are so worthy of your zeal, your untiring zeal, as those which Christian zeal seeks to obtain?

Men applaud zeal in a patriot, a philanthropist, a statesman, a general, a tradesman, and why should not zeal be applauded in a Christian? The objects the Christian seeks are infinitely superior to those sought by such men. Yet such is the perverse spirit of the world, and of many professors of religion too, that if a bold Christian spirit oversteps the bounds of that narrow circle in which the majority of Christians are moving, in order to do more good to his fellows, by arousing them to a sense of the vast importance of an immediate attention to spiritual and eternal things, he is unwisely, unjustly, unkindly branded as an enthusiast. But let such know that they are ignorant of the very meaning of the term enthusiasm. The author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm* has justly observed, "Enthusiasm is a term of quality, not of measurement. Where there is no error of imagination—no misjudging of realities—no calculations which reason condemns, there is no enthusiasm; even though the soul may be on fire, with the velocity of its movement, in pursuit of its chosen object." Now, is there any error in the imagination, when a man imagines that the world ought to be filled with the glory of God? Is there any misjudging of realities, when a man judges that satan's kingdom is extensive, that it ought to be destroyed, and that Christ actually died upon the cross, for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil? Are there any calculations which reason condemns, when we reckon that out of ten hundred millions of human beings, more than seven hundred millions of them are going to hell, and will be there in unutterable agony in thirty years from this hour, if something more is not done to save them than what is now being done? We hurl back the imputation, not with scorn, but with firm decision, and boldly dare any man to prove that he is an enthusiast whose soul is on fire to extend

the glory of God, the triumphs of the cross, and to save the souls of men from a burning hell. We have none of us zeal enough in seeking these objects. Christians, to come up to their duty, ought to have and to manifest, according to their ability, in the sphere in which they move, the zeal which glowed in an Elliott, a Brainard, a Schwartz, a Martyn, the Wesleys, a Whitfield, and a Fletcher. Of all these it may truly be said, they were always zealously affected in good. Elliott, writing on one occasion to the Hon. Mr. Winslow, says, "I have not been dry, night nor day, from the third day of the week to the sixth; but so travelled; and at night have pulled off my boots, wrung my stockings, and so put them on again; and thus I continue; but God steps in and helps. I have considered the word of God in 2 Tim. ii. 3: 'Endure *hardness* as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.'" Nor was this a solitary instance of self-denial; perhaps the world has never witnessed a life more truly devoted to privations than that of this holy man. Well might he be expected to say, just before his death, "Welcome joy!" On the day of his death, in his eightieth year, this "apostle of the Indians," was found teaching the alphabet to an Indian child at his bed-side. "Why not rest from your labour now," said a friend. "Because," said the venerable man, "I have prayed to God to render me useful in my sphere; and he has heard my prayer, for now that I can no longer preach, he leaves me strength enough to teach this poor child his alphabet."

"O for a zeal like his, that we  
The bright example may pursue!  
May gladly give up all to thee,  
To whom our more than all is due."

O brethren, where is our zeal for the glory of God? Where is our strength to pull down the strongholds of the devil, to drive back the hosts of hell, and to advance the interests of Christ? Where is the sounding of our bowels and our mercies to the ruined children of men? Are they restrained? God, and Christ, and hundreds of millions of human souls, who are perishing, cry to us to night—Be zealous! Every fleeting hour, every returning Sabbath, every funeral scene, cry—Be zealous! "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for the night cometh when no man can work."



## DISCOURSE XV.

### THE CLAIMS OF JEHOVAH UPON OUR SERVICES, IN THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

"Ye are not your own: For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

In the discourses already delivered, on "The Obligations of Christians to save the Souls of their Fellow-men," the arguments we have used, to induce you to discharge those obligations, have chiefly been drawn from the good you will accomplish by your efforts; and from the satisfaction and joy you will derive from success in your work. In this discourse we shall take higher ground, and endeavour to enforce those obligations on your attention, from a consideration of the claims which Jehovah has upon the services of his people, in the great work of saving souls.

We have already shown that Christians are agents in the conversion of sinners: that God has constituted his people the "Salt of the earth, and the light of the world," for the express purpose of saving men from death: and we have pointed out some of the most prominent means by which you may answer the great designs of the blessed God, in constituting you his agents in this important work. Let us now candidly and patiently consider the claims which Jehovah has upon our services.

We must not labour to save souls merely for their benefit and our joy; but principally to please God, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve. In the great work of saving souls, God is the master; we are only the servants. We have no right to attempt this work without his authority, and we cannot succeed in it without his blessing. Receiving our authority from him, we have a right to attempt the salvation of any human being: for he says, justly, "All souls are mine." Attended by his blessing, we shall succeed in our work. Complete failure is impossible.

"Except the Lord conduct the plan,  
The best concerted schemes are vain,  
And never can succeed:  
We spend our little strength for nought;  
But if our works in God are wrought,  
They shall be blessed indeed."



Having the sanction of God, and assured of his blessing, we may labour for the salvation of souls without any hesitation, and with perfect confidence of success. In discussing the important subject presented to the mind in the text, we shall endeavour to show,

I. The claims which Jehovah has upon our services.

II. The ground upon which Paul asserts the claims of God to our services.

III. The manner in which our obligations to Jehovah must be discharged.

I. The claims which Jehovah has upon our services.

To have proper views of the nature and extent of Jehovah's claims upon our services, is of the highest importance; for if we err in our views upon these points, it is impossible for us to render unto God perfect and acceptable obedience. Right views must precede right practice. However we may be disposed to do that which is right, we cannot do it if we know not what is right. David acknowledged this, when he said, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."—Psalm cxliii. 10. Saul of Tarsus most feelingly acknowledged this truth, when "He trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts ix. 6. The thousands on the day of Pentecost acknowledged this truth, who, when "They were pricked in their heart, said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—Acts ii. 37. And not to multiply cases to evince this truth, which is nearly self-evident, we will only observe, that the rich, young nobleman who came to Christ, and said, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and the Philippian jailor, who said to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" both acknowledged they could not do the will of God until they knew it.

*All religion consists in obeying God with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.* Repentance for sin is obedience to God's command. Faith in Christ is the work which God requires us to perform. Attending to religious duties is obeying the will of God. Doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God, are what he enjoins. Labouring with all our might to save immortal souls from death is only obedience to God; for he says to all his children, in reference to every sinner of their acquaintance, "Deliver him from going down

to the pit : I have found a ransom." Thus, it is evident that all religion consists in perfect and willing obedience to God's commands.

*One reason why so many professors of religion are so very imperfect in their obedience to God, is their ignorance of the nature and extent of the claims of Jehovah upon them.* They are ignorant of their duty to God, because they are ignorant of the Scriptures. They may not be ignorant of the letter, but they are ignorant of the spirit and meaning of the word of God. They have not, by diligent study, and by earnest, believing prayer, had their eyes opened to see the wondrous things contained in God's law. "They do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." The power of God has not accompanied their reading of the Scriptures. If all Christians were to study the Sacred Volume, with earnest prayer for Divine illumination, in order that they might know the will of God concerning them, they would soon understand their duty ; and instead of resting satisfied with imperfect obedience, if they are sincere, they will stir up themselves to take hold of God, and will never rest till they have Divine strength sufficient to enable them to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.

*In the present day, the sentiment prevails extensively that the claims of God upon us are not paramount and universal, but inferior and partial.* Very few of the people of God believe that he has an exclusive right to their bodies, souls, estates, and all that they possess ; and, therefore, when they do any thing for God and the salvation of immortal souls, they consider that they are making sacrifices for God and for the souls of men : that there is some degree of merit in what they do. We have before now stood aghast with horror, and have nearly wept with grief, when we have heard professed Christians talk of the sacrifices they have made for God and the salvation of immortal souls. We charitably hope that all who use such language do it in ignorance ; and that they do not really mean that they perform works of supererogation, when they do anything for God and for the welfare of human souls. A sacrifice, in the strict and proper sense of the term, is a victim offered to God, to be destroyed for the sake of something else. Under the Christian dispensation there is but one such sacrifice ; and that is the perpetual sacrifice of Christ, who offered himself on the altar of the cross, as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. In the sense of devoting to God that which we might justly retain, none of us ever did, or ever

can, make a sacrifice, either for God, or for the souls of men. In a figurative and an accommodated sense, the bodies of Christians, and their religious services, particularly their praises to God and works of benevolence to men, are called sacrifices, because they are well pleasing to God—are as acceptable to him as a sweet-smelling sacrifice is agreeable to us ; but the idea of *our losing anything* by such sacrifices, or of *meriting anything*, never entered the minds of any of the sacred writers ; for such an idea is contrary to the analogy of faith, to plain expressions of other parts of Sacred Writ, and is, in fact, a monstrous absurdity. When we are commanded to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, the expression means that there must be a complete surrender of the person—the *body*, the whole man, mind and flesh, must be given to God ; and that he is to consider himself no more his own, but the entire property of his Maker—to be as wholly the Lord's property as the *whole burnt-offering* was, no part being devoted to any other use. But, then, when we thus devote all we have and are to God, we confer upon him no favor : we do nothing more than our duty. Nay, we deserve eternal punishment for not having done this from the moment we came to those years when we could distinguish between good and evil. All the years we lived unto ourselves we were positively robbing God of that which justly belonged to him ; for our text declares, "Ye are not your own : your body and spirit are God's."

How any person can make a sacrifice for God, in the sense of loss, we confess that we are utterly unable to comprehend. All that we possess belongs to God. How any man can lose anything, who positively has nothing to lose, is beyond the power of any rational man to conceive. How, then, can we lose anything for God, and in the service of God, when our bodies and spirits are his ? That all we have is God's, might be proved by many solid, convincing, unanswerable arguments. We might remind you of the Author of your being : of the hand by which you are daily fed and hourly sustained : of the Creator of this world, and the sole proprietor of the fulness thereof : of the owner of all the gold and silver in existence, and of the cattle upon a thousand hills. We could prove that this being has made you only the stewards of the property you call your own : that you are dependant upon him for life, and breath, and all things ; for in him you live, and move, and have your being ; and that after you have served him to the utmost extent of your ability, you are

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nothing but unprofitable servants. But we waive all these arguments for the present, for the text alone proves, to a demonstration, that Jehovah's claims upon the services of his people, in saving souls, are PARAMOUNT AND UNIVERSAL : therefore we are in error, grievous and ruinous error, if we suppose that we are making sacrifices for him and his cause, and performing works of supererogation when we do anything for God, in the salvation of the souls of men. We must present ourselves to God as living sacrifices ; but in so doing, we do not make sacrifices to God, for we are already God's property.

*That the claims of Jehovah upon the services of his people, in the salvation of the souls of men, are paramount and universal, is abundantly evident from the unrestricted declarations of the Apostle, "Ye are not your own ; your body and spirit are God's." If these propositions be true, then Jehovah has an exclusive right to our bodies and souls, and justly demands our utmost service ; for we have no right to dispose of ourselves, or of what Jehovah has entrusted to our care, as though we were independent of God. The doctrine of this text is entirely disregarded by all the ungodly. They think that they are their own, and that they have a right to do as they please. And under the influence of this deadly error, they live in direct opposition to the will of God, saying, by their conduct, with the hardened and impious Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" If there are any of the ungodly here present, we would ask, even at the risk of being charged with a digression, because you have been accustomed to think that you are your own, and have a right to do as you please, does it follow that you are your own masters ; that God has no claim upon you and your services ? We must first ascertain whether or not you have been accustomed to think rightly, before we can assent to anything like such a proposition. If your thoughts are brought to, and tried by the Word of God, they will be found erroneous. The Word of God declares, in numberless passages, the truth taught in these lines :—*

" His sovereign power, without our aid,  
Made us of clay, and formed us men ;  
And when, like wandering sheep, we strayed,  
He brought us to his fold again."

You have been accustomed, therefore, to think most erroneously, and you are decidedly wrong in supposing that you are your own, instead of God's. Though you may not de-

sire the knowledge of God, and though you will not have Jehovah to reign over you ; yet, be assured, you are his property ; and you are acting most unjustly, most ungratefully, most impiously, in withholding from him the love of your hearts, the homage of your lips, and the services of your lives. " Will a man rob God ? " He will. But he cannot do so with impunity ; therefore, we earnestly advise all of you who are unconverted to " Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."—Jer. xiii. 16.

It is strange that wicked men should be so blinded as to think they owe their Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer no homage, no love, no obedience ; but it is still more astonishing that any professor of religion should be found entertaining sentiments opposed to the propositions contained in the text. Still, however, this is the case. There are vast numbers of Christians who have been accustomed to think, that though they are laid under deep and numerous obligations to love and serve God, yet they do not think that they are exclusively the property of God, and that his claims upon them are paramount and universal. They think that they have a just right either to do, or to leave undone, many things which the providence and the Spirit of God have called them to perform. They think that they may either seek the salvation of souls, or leave it undone, just as they think proper. Some think they may either preach the Gospel or not, as they please ; never dreaming that having the ability to preach the Gospel lays them under the necessity to do so ; and that a curse will rest upon them if they refuse to " Preach the word." " For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of : for necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel ! "—1 Cor. ix. 16. Others, who are not called to preach, but who have talents for usefulness in other departments of Christian labour, think they may either employ those talents, or bury them, as they please. They evidently do not think that God has a right to the use of the talents which he has committed to their care, unless they think proper to give them to Him. If such parties have done the things which they have been called to do, by the Providence and Spirit of God, they have considered that they have performed works of supererogation, and that they have done more than God could reasonably require, or justly ex-

pect from them ; therefore, they have foolishly thought, and unwisely said, that they have made sacrifices for God, by what they have done. But do these views harmonize with the doctrine contained in the expressions, "Ye are not your own. . . . Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his?" Most certainly they do not. The doctrine of the text is at eternal variance with the views now under consideration. The man who does all he can for God, in every possible way, no more performs works of supererogation than that man does who pays a just debt ; for he barely does his duty, and nothing more : while that man who neglects to do anything for God, which he can do, is manifestly unjust ; for he refuses to use the talents which God has entrusted to his care, in the way that God directs. That these statements are correct, we think the text abundantly proves.

If, then, the foregoing reasonings are correct, and we urge you to test them by the only standard of truth—the Word of God, we are brought to the conclusion, that the claims of God upon us are paramount and universal. His claims to our services stand above and before the claims of our families, of our friends, of our business, of our pleasure, yea, of our own lives. And while His claims are thus paramount, they are also universal. He has a right to the service of our bodies, our souls, our time, our influence, our property, our wives, our children, our all. He commands us to serve him to the utmost of our ability, in the great work of saving souls : the ways in which we are thus to serve him have been already pointed out. Has not Jehovah solid claims to our best and unwearied services in this great work ? Perhaps some demur. Inclination, or habit, or fear, or shame, prevents them from candidly acknowledging that Jehovah has a paramount and universal claim to their best and unwearied efforts in saving souls. We shall, therefore, proceed to consider,

II. The ground upon which Paul asserts Jehovah's claims to our services.

"Ye are bought with a price." Then we are not only God's property, but his purchased property. In order that we may rightly understand this reason which Paul gives, why we are not our own, and why we should glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his ;—and in order that we may become more deeply impressed in reference to the claims

which Jehovah has upon our best and unwearied services in the great work of saving souls, let us consider,

*The position in which sin had placed us.* Man, you are perfectly aware, is a fallen creature. He is not now what he was when created by Jehovah. He was then wise, holy, benevolent, and happy. He stood erect in the image of his Maker. His soul, a transcript of the moral loveliness and grandeur of the great I AM. His body the most fearful and wonderful of all God's material works. There is nothing wanting in man to complete his dignity and his bliss. He stands forth the latest and best of all the works of the great Creator. Divine wisdom, and power, and goodness have exhibited their loftiest attributes in the creation of man. God had before now created spirits—wise, holy, benevolent, and happy; he had before now created material objects of wonderful beauty, loveliness, and grandeur: for angels existed before man's creation, and the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all to be found in them, were made before the progenitors of our race were created. But now the blessed Three in One confer together. The decree is passed to form a creature like to whom, as yet, none exists in the creation of God. That decree is recorded in these words: "Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." That decree was instantly carried into effect; for it is immediately added, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."—Gen. ii. 26, 27. Behold then this wonderful creature as he comes forth from the hand of his Maker. He is allied to angels; possessing a nature like theirs, and intellectual and moral powers equal to theirs. He is endowed with reason, will, memory, conscience, and affections. His new born spirit is filled with light, love, purity, and joy; and basks in the unclouded light of Jehovah's smiling countenance. But look further and you will see that he is allied to the material world in which he is placed; for he has a human body, the most wonderful of all the animate and inanimate things, and of all the living creatures which God has made, and by which man is surrounded. Look at that body: is it not fearfully and wonderfully made? "The complicated and curious texture of the human body is indeed wonderful; and it is so exquisitely nice and delicate, that the slightest accident may im-

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pair and destroy in a moment some of those parts essentially necessary to the continuance of life ; and hence we are both fearfully and wonderfully made." Such is the truth in reference to the human body marred by sin. But, oh ! look at this wondrous work of God before sin has touched it. See that body !—the eyes sparkle with delight—the countenance is radiant with joy—the elastic frame stands ereet, and the limbs are full of strength and life. In that body there is nothing to impair its powers, to mar its beauty and grandeur. We have seen some fine specimens of dignity and loveliness in human frames ; but we conceive, that for dignity of appearance, none of the sons of men ever equalled Adam ; and for loveliness, none of the daughters of men have ever rivalled Eve. The soul thus glorious, and the body thus wonderful, are, by the wisdom, and power, and goodness of God, united in the closest bonds ; and man stands forth the great and only connecting link between the spiritual and material works of the great Creator.

No sooner did satan gaze upon this wonderful creation than his hatred to God burst out afresh ; and he bent all his energies to ruin for ever the holy and happy pair, who, with love unutterable and joy unspeakable, till the ground, eat the fruits, drink the waters, traverse the walks, or recline in the bowers of lovely Eden. With his infernal cunning, he commences his attack on the weaker of the two ; and, by his lies, he raises unbelief and pride in the mind of Eve : thus effects her ruin, and through her the ruin of Adam. They both eat the forbidden fruit : their ruin and that of their posterity is effected. What a change we behold ! Adam and Eve flying from the presence of God ; but they are speedily discovered ; they are sentenced to endure the greatest of temporal miseries ; the ground is cursed for their sake ; they are driven from Eden ; they are doomed to death—temporal, spiritual, and eternal. What a change has sin caused in that once happy pair ! Their souls how changed ! their light has become darkness ! their purity, pollution ! their benevolence, selfishness ! their joy, misery ! Their bodies begin to feel disease, debility, and exhaustion. The eye has lost its brilliancy, the countenance its glow of health, the frame its elasticity, the limbs their strength and life ! Man has become the guilty, the weak, and the miserable creature we now behold him : is doomed to toil out a wretched existence on the earth, then to become the companion of the devil and his angels in the everlasting fire which was prepared originally for devils alone.

In the sad consequences of Adam's fall we all participate. We come into the world in a state of ignorance, and with a nature powerfully inclined to evil. Soon as we begin to exercise our intellectual and moral powers, we go astray from God like lost sheep, and turn every one to his own way of sinning. We are found an ungodly race,—without strength to do good,—at enmity with God; ever aiming at happiness, but constantly missing the mark; ever existing under the wrath of God, we are miserable in our souls, and all outward things tend to augment that misery. Against us the elements war—the earth fights—our fellow-beings are arrayed. Death watches over every step we take, and is ready, without a moment's warning, to plunge his shaft into our hearts, and send our bodies to the grave, which gapes to receive them. For the reception of our spirits hell has opened wide her jaws, and devils hover around us to drag them into the place of torment, soon as they escapè the body, where they must endlessly exist, enduring the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Such is a faint sketch of the position in which sin had placed us. Is it too highly drawn? Ah, no! The human heart cannot imagine, much more describe, the sad position in which sin had placed our race. We know not fully the meaning of those three declarations of holy writ: “To be carnally minded is death. . . . Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.” “The wages of sin is death.” “These shall go away into eternal punishment.”

Now, *Christians, mark the position in which God has placed you by his grace.* By his glorious grace he has changed your hearts, your state, and your prospects. Your dark minds he has enlightened, your hard hearts he has broken, your stubborn wills he has subdued, your seared consciences he has softened, your wandering imaginations he has restrained, your filthy memories he has cleansed, your vain thoughts he has banished. In one word, your ruined souls he has restored, your filthy natures he has washed in the laver of regeneration, and your broken powers he has renewed; so that you are new creatures in Christ Jesus: “Old things have passed away, and all things have become new.” He has also changed your state: for by his glorious grace he has made you accepted in the beloved. You are, therefore, now free from condemnation; you have liberty of access to the throne of grace; you have strength to do the will of God; and you have fellowship with God and his Son Jesus Christ. Your

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state therefore is most blessed : for you must have peace, and joy, and love, and hope, through believing. You have God for your Father and friend, Christ for your intercessor, the Holy Spirit for your comforter, the angels for your ministering spirits, the children of God for your companions—all things working together for your good, and the afflictions of the present life working out for you an increase of glory in the world which is to come. If you are not happy, it is a great shame. He has also by his grace changed your prospects. You have before you a career of usefulness, honour, and joy ; for he has called you to come to his help and assist him in saving souls from death : yea, he has committed this work exclusively to you and your fellow saints ; so that a glorious career lies before you if you will pluck up courage and do what God requires. In addition to this, you have the prospect of a peaceful, triumphant, useful death. And after you are dead, if you live aright, your souls shall rest from their labours ; and you shall continue to speak for the good of souls and the glory of God through those whom you saved while living. And then, above all, you have the prospect of a glorious resurrection, and the good hope that an entrance will be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And in that kingdom you will wear a crown, waive a palm, wear white robes, be fed by the Lamb, and lead to living fountains of water ; God will wipe all tears from your eyes ; and, filled with wisdom, love, purity, joy, and glory, you shall eternally sing the praises of God and the Lamb. Has God thus of his free grace changed your hearts, your state, and your prospects, and yet has not an exclusive right to your bodies and spirits,—a paramount and universal claim upon your services, in changing the hearts, and state and prospects of your fellow-creatures who remain unchanged ? It cannot be that you can think that you are your own, if you rightly consider what God has done for you. You must own that ye are God's, and that he has a paramount and universal claim upon your services in the salvation of your fellow-men.

*Think again, ye saints, that to do these great things for you cost God much : for "Ye are bought with a price." God could not remit our punishment and restore us to his favour without a price. The law of God, which is holy, just, and good, cannot be broken with impunity ; therefore we must either perish eternally, or a sufficient atonement must be made for our sins. The nature of God must be entirely changed before he can*

permit sin to go unpunished. Sin is the abominable thing which God hates. It is rebellion against the government of God; treason against his majesty; disobedience to his law; destructive to the order and happiness of his universe. The wisdom, truth, justice, holiness, and goodness of God, therefore, forbid that man should be saved without a ransom price of sufficient value to atone for the enormity of the offence committed against infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness. The law of God and the moral government of Jehovah both positively forbid that the offender shall be forgiven and restored to his justly forfeited privileges without a sufficient ransom price. The law says, the "Soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and unless this penalty is strictly inflicted, the divine government will be set at naught, and God himself despised by all his intelligent creatures. The Rev. W. Cooke most justly observes, "For God to pardon the rebel and to receive him into his favour, without an atonement, would be incompatible with the claims of justice, and subversive of the divine government; it would annul the authority of the law, which man had broken; would interfere with the rectitude and stability of the divine government; would throw down the guards of moral order in the universe; and weaken or destroy many powerful motives to obedience, to confidence, to reverence, and holiness. Therefore a propitiation was required, and it was presented in the sacrifice of Christ." A price for our ransom sufficient to enable God to be "a just God," and yet "a Saviour," was required. Those who assert the contrary, know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. They are led astray by that deceitful guide, human reason, are bewildered in the labyrinths of pride, and completely lost in the fogs of unbelief.

The price required for our ransom *Jehovah found*—*Jehovah paid*. The blessed God not being able to deliver us from guilt, bondage, misery, and eternal death, without a ransom—without an equivalent; and man not being able to pay the price required, He, in his love, found a *precious—suitable—sufficient ransom*. The living Jehovah exclaims, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." The price required, and which Jehovah paid, to satisfy the claims of infinite wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, and goodness; the price required and paid to vindicate the divine law, and to make the divine government respected, was the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father prepares a body for the Son like unto ours in all things, sin only excepted.

Great as is the gift,—though Christ is the Son of God—of the same nature, the same dignity, and the same duration,—though he is his only begotten Son, and his well beloved Son—yet, he spares him not, but delivers him up for us all. Christ, in obedience to the will of the Father, joyfully goes through the preparatory course of temptations, poverty, and sufferings, which are requisite to fit him for the great work of mediation between God and man; and having finished his honourable course, as the great exemplar of what man should *be*, and should *do*, he arrives at the cross, and there he pours forth his blood for the remission of sins; makes his soul an offering for sin; expires forsaken of God, in order that God may return to man, and deliver him from his fall—save him from his punishment—restore him to the favour of his Maker, and fit him *for*, and bring him *to* heaven. Was not that price an equivalent, yea, more than an equivalent for the sins of our race? The *moral expediency* men may cry out, “Here is the marketing principle;” but we cannot, for their sneers, nor yet for their candid arguments, hide the truth, that the sacrifice of Christ is continually held forth in the scriptures as the price—the equivalent—the all sufficient ransom, for the salvation of the souls of men. One of the strongest minds that the world has been blessed with of late years; a mind which, for intellectual power, metaphysical skill, and critical acumen, has rarely been equalled, has given us the following thought: “It is the grand error of Deism to make reason the ultimate judge, not only of the *facts* contained in revelation, but of the nature of those facts and of the manner in which they exist. Socinianism is nothing more than Deism refined. It takes shelter under the letter of revelation, and is the more dangerous because the more specious. It strikes me that we sustain towards God the joint character of criminals and debtors. Our criminality requires an expiation to be made; but, if we be not considered in the light of debtors also, I cannot conceive how it can be reconciled with moral justice that God should accept the innocent for the guilty.”—Samuel Drew, M.A. In the light of criminals the Bible represents us, and that God regards us as debtors also, is clearly evident from the Lord’s prayer, where Christ commands us to pray to God to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Besides, if the sacrifice of Christ is only an expedient in the moral government of God, by which Jehovah graciously forgives the penitent, believing sinner, why could not this have been stated in the scriptures in as clear terms as the doctrine of equiva-

lency is stated. In the blessed Bible we find nothing about Christ's sacrifice being an expedient in the moral government, by which sin is atoned for, and its punishment remitted; but we meet with numbers of passages which fully express that his sacrifice was equivalent to the guilt and punishment of man's sin; a sufficient price to secure the pardon of the one and the remission of the other. What mean the expressions, "Ye are bought with a price; Redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ; Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood; He gave himself a ransom for all; Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." If these expressions do not point out the fact that Christ's sacrifice is the equivalent, and the only equivalent for our redemption, then they are calculated to mislead, and ought to be expunged from the word of God. Let us not be wise above what is written. The Holy Spirit has used, depend upon it, the proper words to express the nature, the greatness, the design of Christ's precious sacrifice. We have ever viewed the sacrifice of Christ as more than an equivalent for the sins of the human race. Less could not have sufficed for man's guilt; but were the actual numbers of the human race to multiply ten thousand fold to whatever have lived, do live, and will live, the sacrifice of Jesus would be sufficient for them all. Christ is more excellent than all creatures. He is not only above all in excellency and dignity; but he is the fountain of the excellency of all creatures: hence, his sacrifice is certainly sufficient for all men. His sacrificial death not only appears a sufficient price for the ransom of all the human race in the estimation of men and angels: but the infinitely wise God declares it is sufficient. To describe the greatness of the price at which we have been bought is impossible. Peter most touchingly alludes to it in these words: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." This amazing price God paid for every one of us; for "Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man." Christ is born that we may not die; he is nailed to the cross that we may go free; he endures the wrath of a sin avenging God that

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we may escape it; he feels all the pains and horrors of our curse that we may be happy for ever. And after paying such a price for us, has not God an exclusive right to our bodies and spirits, which he has thus purchased? and has he not a paramount and universal claim upon our best and unwearied services? While we profess any regard to the principles of justice, honour, and gratitude, we must confess that we are not our own; but that our bodies and our spirits are God's, and that he has an inalienable, an incontrovertible, and an interminable right to our services.

*In forming your decision, whether God has an exclusive right to your bodies and souls, or not, do not on any account forget the circumstances under which God paid this amazing price.* A passage from St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, and one from the 1st epistle of John, will materially assist you in your calculations. Think deeply on this passage of Paul's, "For when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Romans v. The following passage of John's is also worthy your serious attention, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins."—John iv. 9, 10. When we were ungodly: impious, unjust, and selfish, Christ died for us. When we were without strength, to resist evil and do good, Christ died for us. When we were sinners—miserable wanderers from God and happiness, Christ died for us. When we were enemies to God, hating his character, hating his laws, hating his government, without cause, Christ died for us. Bad as we were, miserable as we were, exposed to eternal death though we were, yet there was no penitence for sin, no reformation of conduct, no entreaty for mercy, when God so loved us as to give his Son to die for us. When hardened in heart, rebellious in practice, and blaspheming and defying God with our lips, he gave his Son to die for us. Here is love unparalleled. What we needed, God, in the infinitude of his love, gave, without any desire on our part for such a gift, and without any solicitation for such mercy. Mortals gaze too often with stoical indifference on the misery of their fellows, and some even exult with malicious pleasure



over the wretchedness of their enemies ; but when God saw a world of enemies up in arms against him, instead of sending his Son Jesus Christ to punish them, he sends him to die for them. " For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." No love is like this : so strong, so disinterested, so exalted, so conspicuous. Who can tell its greatness ? It passeth knowledge !

" Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made ;  
Were every stick on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade ;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry ;  
Nor would the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky."

His love to us, as individuals, is equally as striking as his love to our race at large. When he called us by his grace, and revealed his Son in us, we were utterly unworthy of his love. The following passages describe our state, and the goodness of our blessed God to us : " And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight."—Col. i. 21, 22. " But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved ;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ."—Ephesians i. 4-7. " But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God : Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."—1 Peter ii. 9, 10. " Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light : Who hath delivered us from the powers of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son : In whom we have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—Col. i. 12-14. " BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed

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upon us, that *we* should be called the sons of God." Can we study these passages, and say that we are our own? We cannot.

When you think, then, my dear hearers, of the position in which sin had placed us : of the position in which God has placed us, by his grace : of the amazing price which it cost Jehovah to redeem us, that he might alter our position : of the circumstances under which God paid this amazing price : and the special love he has manifested to us, by bringing us to himself ; must you not acknowledge that our bodies and spirits are his ; and that his claims upon our services, in the great work of saving souls, are paramount and universal ? Must you not say, with the poet,

" He justly claims us for his own,  
Who bought us with a price :  
The Christian lives to Christ alone,  
To Christ alone he dies." ?

III. The manner in which our obligations to Jehovah must be discharged.

This is clearly stated in the text : " Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." The term glorify has two significations. It signifies to pay honour or praise in worship : it also means to procure honour or praise to any one. If we are to discharge our obligations to God, we must glorify him in both these senses. To discharge our duty to God, who has bought us with a price, we must,

*Honour Him in worship.* When the period arrives for the private, domestic, social, or public worship of God, we should repair to the place of worship, and with the deepest reverence, and with becoming humility, we should " worship and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker," adoring his blessed name, and rendering him the homage of both soul and body. The warmest ascriptions of praise should ascend to his throne, for the mercies received from his hands : for the deliverances he has wrought out for us : and for the exceeding great and precious promises of future good, which he has confirmed unto us by his oath. With the utmost sincerity we should confess to him our manifold sins : with deep earnestness we should deprecate his wrath : and with the highest confidence in his goodness we should implore his mercy. With the Spirit and with the understanding also, if we have any voice for singing, must we sing his

praises, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs ; singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. We should read his Word, and listen to the preaching of his Gospel, with attention, gratitude, and delight ; and with diligence, cheerfulness, and vigilance we should be "doers of the word," and not readers and "hearers only," deceiving our own selves. By such worship as this, accompanied with proper dispositions of the mind, and followed by corresponding actions, we glorify God in that manner which is acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We are to glorify God in our body and spirit, which are his, by

*Procuring Him honour from others.* Many Christians think that they have done all that God requires when they have personally rendered that honour to God, in worship, which is due unto his name. They do not conceive that they are laid under any obligations to procure God honour from their fellow-men ; but in this they are egregiously mistaken. To glorify God as much means to procure him honour from others, as it does to honour him ourselves, by worshipping him at all those places, and at all those times his word directs ; therefore, unless we are labouring for the conversion of sinners, that they may be brought to glorify God, we are not performing our duty to him, who hath bought us with a price. To procure God honour from others, we should avoid all those things which would lead men to think unfavourably of religion ; and so live as to induce them to love, serve, and honour God. All our deportment should be unblameable. We should form no connections that would have a tendency to dishonour religion : we should enter into no engagements that would give ungodly men reason to question the genuineness of our personal piety : and we should avoid the very appearance of evil. In a word, we should be exemplary for truth, honesty, industry, sobriety, humility, and charity ; so that the name of our God and his doctrine may not be blasphemed. To glorify God, we should, moreover, use all our powers of mind to bring men to God. We ought to read, to study, and to pray that we may become wise to win souls ; and everything about us that is repulsive, or that would in any way hinder our usefulness to the souls of men, we should labour diligently and earnestly to remove. We should appropriate to the cause of God, of the worldly substance which he has committed to our care, all we possibly can, with a cheerful heart, and without any dread of future want. Our bodies also should be devoted, as much as

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possible, to the great work of saving souls, that God may be glorified. We ought not to think any journey too great, that we can accomplish; nor any difficulty insuperable, that only wants perseverance to remove it; nor any weariness too painful, that we can possibly sustain, in the great work of bringing ungodly men to glorify God, if it appear plain that God's cause needs our presence: that his glory would be promoted, in the salvation of souls, by taking that journey, encountering that difficulty, and sustaining that weariness. In short, if we would glorify God in our bodies, we must present them a living oblation to God; and employ them, as we have opportunity, in doing good to others. The following lines justly express the manner in which we should glorify God, in our bodies and spirits, which are his:—

“ O God, what offering shall I give  
 To thee, the Lord of earth and skies?  
 My spirit, soul, and flesh receive—  
 A holy, living sacrifice:  
 Small as it is, 'tis all my store;  
 More shouldst thou have, if I had more.  
 Now then, my God, thou hast my soul;  
 No longer mine, but thine I am:  
 Guard thou thine own, possess it whole;  
 Cheer it with hope, with love inflame:  
 Thou hast my spirit; there display  
 Thy glory, to the perfect day.  
 Thou hast my flesh, thy hallow'd shrine,  
 Devoted solely to thy will;  
 Here let thy light for ever shine,  
 This house still let thy presence fill:  
 O! Source of Life; live, dwell, and move  
 In me, till all my life be love.”

When, from the heart, we can sing these lines, as our experience, then, but not till then, shall we rightly discharge our obligations to him who hath bought us with a price. Thus, to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his, is

*Our reasonable duty.* In the twelfth of Romans, Paul writes, “ I BESEECH you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Paul, you perceive, does not call the presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice to God, or a sacrifice for God, but *our reasonable service*. He evidently regarded the Romans, and all Christians, as God's property, in an exclusive sense; and, therefore, the reasonable duty of all to devote themselves

entirely to God's service, as the burnt offering was devoted under the law. In our text, he says, "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." And is not this reasonable? Is there anything irrational, unjust, or exorbitant in this demand? We have already shown that God has purchased you at an amazing price; does it not therefore follow, as a certain consequence, that you are God's property? This being the case, does not the Almighty make a rational, a righteous, a fair demand, when he claims you as his; requires you to worship him yourselves; and to do all that in you lies to bring others to love, serve, and honour him? Do you not conceive that your demand is reasonable, when you claim from a fellow-being that which you have bought and paid for with money? You certainly do. Surely, then, God makes a reasonable demand when he claims your bodies and spirits, which he has purchased with the precious blood of his dear Son. Would you not conceive, if by a large sum of money you had rescued a man from slavery and from death, that he would be in duty bound to love, honour, and serve you, to the best of his ability? You certainly would. Then is not God reasonable in his demands, when he claims your bodies and spirits, seeing that by the death of his Son he has opened your way from slavery to freedom, from death to life, from hell to heaven? If you were, at the risk of your own life, to save a person from death, would you not think that he ought to love you, honour you, and serve you, if he had it in his power? There is no doubt but you would. Is not, then, the claim of Jehovah reasonable, when he requires us to glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his, seeing that he has actually given Christ's body to die upon the cross, and his soul to be there made an offering for sin, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life? If it is unreasonable for a man to refuse to give us that which we have paid him for: if it is unjust for that man to refuse to love and serve us whom we have, at great expense, delivered from slavery and death: if it is ungrateful in a man, whose life we have saved, to despise and injure us; then those are the most unreasonable, unjust, and ungrateful of all creatures who refuse to glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which he has purchased at such a fearful price as the precious blood of his only and well-beloved Son. While there is any distinction between right and wrong, between justice and injustice, between gratitude and ingrat-

tude, it will appear evident to all reasonable beings that God makes a reasonable and just demand, when he requires us to glorify him in our bodies and spirits, which are his. He has a right to our supreme and constant worship : a right to our best and unwearied services, in promoting the salvation of others.

The sentiments we have advanced in this discourse are not at all agreeable to you who are irreligious: they are hated, and sometimes ridiculed by you. But why do you hate and ridicule these sentiments? Is it because they are not true? Ah! no. You are not, we trust, so ignorant, so abandoned, and so shameless as to deny their truth. Then why do you despise and ridicule them? Simply because they condemn the selfishness of your hearts and the wickedness of your lives. On the bare admission of this fact, you would stand self-convicted of a train of the most horrid villanies that were ever perpetrated under the sun. Admit the truth of these sentiments, and then, at the bar of your own reason, you are condemned for the greatest injustice and the blackest ingratitude invariably manifested, not to a fellow-creature, but to your great Creator, who has bought you with a price! Then every dictate of your judgment, every volition of your will, every feeling of your hearts, would pronounce your condemnation; and in every wrong action of your lives you would read the sentence of eternal death: for however moral you may have been, you have not even attempted to glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are his; but in all things you have sought your own ease, your own profit, your own pleasure, and your own worldly honour. This you have done, too, at the expense of God. The blessings he has given, you have consumed upon your lusts; and your lives, which he has purchased and prolonged, you have spent in rebelling against him. Though you, on these grounds, despise and ridicule the sentiments we have advanced this day, yet remember, they are as true as God is true, and as immutable as the nature of the great I AM; therefore, your guilt is the same as if you acknowledged their truth, and punishment will be inflicted upon you in proportion to your guilt, unless you repent, and alter your course. Flatter not yourselves that the Lord God is an idle spectator of your unblushing crimes. Your robberies, which you have practiced upon God himself, for years, are carefully registered, by his own hand, in the books of judgment. They are there written with a pen of iron, and engraved with the point of a diamond;

and eternity itself cannot wear out the black, the deep, the terrible characters which record your guilt. No power on earth, no power in heaven, save that of the Almighty Jesus, can erase that dreadful record. When the awful day of judgment arrives, and the books are opened, then will the eternal Judge read over the number of your robberies, point out their enormity, and call upon you to show cause why you should not be punished with eternal death. Then, what will ye say? What can ye say? You must be speechless. Guilt, fear, shame, astonishment will strike you dumb. The eternal Judge, receiving no answer, will then pass upon you the terrific sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Such is the certain doom which awaits all who refuse to glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are his. Have you seriously considered, dear fellow-creatures, that the end of your course is eternal death? Then why do you not glorify God in your bodies and spirits, that you may escape eternal woe? If you have not considered this matter, it is high time you did; for you know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. "O! that ye were wise, that ye understood this, that ye would consider your latter end!" Remember, God takes no pleasure in your death. He has bought you with a price, that you might live to his glory here, and enjoy his glory in the world to come. Go, then, by prayer, to his throne. Confess your sins. Implore his mercy. Present your bodies and spirits to him, as a living sacrifice, in the name of Jesus Christ, and he will blot out your transgressions, as a cloud; and your iniquities, as a thick cloud, from before his face.

The sentiments advanced in this discourse are not cordially received, and fully acted upon, by many professing Christians. Many professors do not glorify God in their bodies and spirits which are his, as they ought. Their laxity of morals, their worldly conformity, their neglect of spiritual duties, and their non-enjoyment of spiritual privileges, prove the truth of this allegation. If we wanted other proof, we would point to their laziness in the work of God, their want of liberality in supporting his cause, their want of charity to the poor, and, above all, their want of compassion for the souls of their unconverted neighbours, their unrenewed countrymen, and their perishing race. Professors of religion, how long do you mean to rob God, whom you profess to serve? How long are you going to wound the Saviour, whom you profess to love? How long will you grieve the

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Holy Spirit, whom you profess to honour? Are you destitute of justice, of gratitude, of honesty? Then why do you not ascertain your duty to God, and perform it? Do you mean to creep on, with your imperfect views and your imperfect obedience, until you are lost forever? Many of you must be re-converted, or you will be lost. When you were first converted to God, you glorified God in your bodies and spirits; especially in seeking the salvation of the souls of your fellow-men. But you have lost your first love; and now you are getting but little good for yourselves, and doing but little good to the souls of your fellow-men. Come, ye professors of the religion of Jesus, arise and shake yourselves from your slumbers, or you will sleep the sleep of death. Be resolved, from this hour, to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Think no more, talk no more about making sacrifices for God and the souls of men. Do your duty to God and human souls, and you will have nothing left to make sacrifices with. Remember, reason demands, justice demands, gratitude demands, your present usefulness and your future glory demand, that from this moment you glorify God in your body and spirit, which are God's. And will you not listen to these loud calls? Will you not obey them? Yes, yes you will. Many of you, hitherto, have not been sufficiently aware of your duty; but from what you have heard to-day, you will go and search the scriptures with renewed diligence: you will examine your hearts and lives, in order to ascertain whether you have done your duty: finding you have not, you will fall upon your knees before God in private: you will seek forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb: you will rise from your knees pardoned, and determined henceforth to live not unto yourselves, but unto him who died for you, and rose again. May the blessed triune God enable you to do so.

There are some Christians here who believe the sentiments we have now advanced, and who are ever striving to be guided by them. You are ever seeking to glorify God by your own acts of worship, and by trying to bring your fellow-men to love, adore, and serve him. We congratulate you on your distinguished felicity. Your days glide sweetly away, in receiving and in doing good: your nights are unattended with the pangs of remorse: your path brightens as you proceed onward to your heavenly home: and soon will the everlasting honours and pleasures of heaven be yours. Hold fast your sentiments. Walk by the

same rule, the word of God, which has hitherto been your guide. Mind the same things : remember, your great business is the salvation of souls. Rest on the arm of the same saviour, follow the leadings of the same Spirit, and in a short while you shall hear the blessed words addressed to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of your Lord." Then shall you know the blessedness resulting from glorifying God in your body and spirit, which are his. Then shall you understand the meaning of that declaration, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes : and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are done away."

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## DISCOURSE XVI.

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### CHRIST THE CHRISTIAN'S EXEMPLAR IN THE GREAT WORK OF SAVING SOULS.

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."—JOHN iv. 34.

Christ hath left us an example that we should follow his steps. The apostle Paul, in the Hebrews, while he directs the attention of his readers to the ancient worthies, as illustrious examples of faith in God, courage in his cause, and devotion to his work, especially requires them to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith, and the great example of all Christians in the performance of every duty enjoined upon them in the word of God. We had some thoughts of presenting you with examples of devotion to the salvation of souls, as exhibited in the lives of eminent saints; for as the Rev. Samuel Hulse justly observes: "Man is acted upon by his fellow-man, and it is of immense importance to keep before the mind the images of those who, under the guiding light, and ennobling influence of true religion, counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might finish their course with joy. At the head of this class, and incomparably beyond all actual approach, stands Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh. Next to him rank his holy apostles. Their lives are recorded by the faithful pen of inspiration, and with them the mind should be kept devoutly familiar. To these may be added the lives of Wesley, Fletcher, Bramwell, Carvossu, Janeway, Matthew Henry and Patrick Henry, &c. Keep these holy examples ever fresh in your recollection. Read them again and again; and make them your every-day models. To derive the fullest advantage from biography, there must be sympathy between us and the subject; and to produce this sympathy, there must be similarity in our conditions: for only as our conditions in life are alike, can he be in the fullest sense an example to us. The rich may read the life of Thomas Wilson, Esq., of London, and learn how wealth may be employed to the permanent extension of the cause of God in neglected districts. The

tradesman may see in the diary of Williams, of Kidderminster, how fully religious principles and objects may be blended with secular pursuits. The working man may see in the life of Harlan Page how pregnant a lowly station is with opportunities of usefulness, and how humble talents may turn those opportunities to win souls to Christ. Nor should the life of our own Kilham be omitted. . . . He was not only an enlightened and firm friend of freedom, but there glowed in his heart a flame of love and zeal so pure and intense, as to elevate and sanctify his life in all its purposes and acts. Read the following passage, which deserves to be placed among the famous sayings of good men, which unveils his heart, and shows us the sacred passion which consumed him: 'Many times, while others sleep, my rest is banished by earnest desires and fervent prayers for the Church of God; I often wish I could live without sleep, that I might accomplish the work more fully which the Lord has given me to do.' Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."\*

We shall consider,

- I. The work which Christ had to perform when on earth.
- II. The proofs that it was the Father's will that Christ should finish that work.
- III. The supreme concern and constant care of Christ to do the will and finish the work of his father, afford the best example for Christians to follow in the discharge of their duties to the souls of men.

- I. The work which Christ had to perform when on earth.

*The work which Christ came to finish was of the greatest importance.* We are not to suppose for one moment that the blessed Redeemer came into the world on any matter of small import. A being infinitely wise would never leave the glories of heaven, the bosom of his Father, the throne of universal empire, the homage of angels, and the riches of eternity: would never make himself of no reputation, and take upon him human nature, with its infirmities and sorrows; nor pass his time here in the form of a servant, enduring all manner of privations, temptations, and woes; nor become obedient unto

\* *Vide*—The Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion, pages 436 and 437.

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death, even the death of the cross, to gain that which is of little value when gained. A being infinitely wise must have an end in view worthy of the means he employs to gain that end. Whenever mortals use vast means to gain something of little value, we pity their ignorance, and laugh at their folly; for we all know that the winds need not blow a hurricane for the purpose of wafting a feather, nor the ocean wrought into tempest merely to drown a fly. We must admit, therefore, if Christ came to accomplish a work of little importance, when finished, in him cannot be "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." If he came merely to enlighten the human race, and give us an example worthy our imitation, as some affirm, then he is unwise; for he might have accomplished this at far less cost to himself, and with equal benefit to us, without his becoming human, and living, and suffering, and dying on this earth in the manner in which he did. He could have given us all the instruction we needed, and an example worthy the imitation of all men, by any one of the prophets, or by a succession of prophets, without his being made flesh. This restricted view of the Saviour's work stamps the character of Christ with consummate folly.

The work which Christ came to perform was of far greater importance than giving us right instruction and a perfect example; for he came to make an atonement for our sins, to take away the guilt, power, pollution, and punishment of our sins by the sacrifice of himself, and thus save us from the inconceivable torments of hell, which are eternal in their duration. This is clearly evident from express declarations of God's word. Jesus said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."—1 Peter iii. 18. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. 16. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."—Heb. ix. 28. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for (or by) the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—Heb. ii. 9. Such are a sample of the statements of the sacred volume respecting the great work which Christ came into the world to accomplish.

Here, we see an end in view worthy of the astonishing

means employed by the Saviour to gain that end. The salvation of human souls from inexpressible and eternal misery, is an end worthy the sacrifice of Christ. For what are we to understand by the loss of the souls of men? With the Bible in our hands, and with the firm belief that its statements are true, we ask, what are we to understand by the loss of the souls of men? Does it not consist in the present and eternal separation of the soul from the image, favour, and happiness of God, and in the present and eternal sufferance of the curse and wrath of Almighty God? It does. What finite mind, then, can conceive, much more express, the amazing evils and sorrows connected with such a separation from God, and with the endurance of such wrath? All that is dark, and painful, and wretched in the material universe, is put into requisition by the sacred writers, yea, by Christ himself, to express the evils and misery of this separation *from God*, and this curse *of God*. Darkness, fire and brimstone, undying worms, burning tempests, weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, and death, are all employed to shadow forth the evils of the separation of the soul from God. The separation of the soul from God in this world, is the great cause of the ignorance, wickedness, and misery which exist on the earth. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" and if this be the case here, where judgment is mixed with mercy, and where men are restrained by the light of the gospel, the presence of the pious, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit, what will their condition be when all restraints are withdrawn, when they are the companions of the devil and his angels, when wrath is poured out without mixture, when all hope expires, and nothing is left but fell despair? We shudder at the bare contemplation of such misery. To form a correct estimate of the loss of the soul, we must enter the regions of perdition, and gaze upon that fiery lake—feel that darkness—witness that living death—listen to that weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth;—yea, we must ourselves be the subjects of the remorse, the horror, the despair of the lost to all eternity; then, but not till then, can we form a full estimate of the greatness of that loss—the loss of the soul. God only knows the wrath of God: therefore, he only can estimate fully the greatness of the loss of the soul; and he informs us that the gain of the whole world would not compensate any man for the loss of his soul. Christ came to prevent this dreadful and

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irretrievable loss. He came to bring us back to God, from whom we had strayed, and to save us from the burning, bottomless pit, to which we were hastening. He came to work out salvation for us, that we might enjoy here the light, the love, the purity, and joy which God imparts to all who live in communion with him; and that we might enjoy the bliss of heaven throughout eternity. It is impossible for the human mind to form a conception of any work equal to Christ's. In importance, in benevolence, in glory, it casts all others into shade; yea, it even surpasses the wonders of creation:

" 'Twas great to speak a world from nought,  
'Twas greater to redeem."

Every other work fades away before the redeeming work of Christ, and acknowledges the supremacy of that enterprise which saves millions of human souls from everlasting burnings, and puts them in possession of eternal life. Such was the work which God sent his Son to accomplish.

*The work which Christ came to do was God's work.* No man can save the souls of his fellow-men, in the strict sense of redeeming them. This is God's work, and his alone. When we speak of Christians saving the souls of men, we only mean that they are agents in Christ's hand in the work of turning them to Christ for salvation. We do not conceive, for one moment, that you have received the impression, from any thing advanced in these discourses, that you are to go and redeem the souls of men; but still we deem it our duty here to state plainly that the redemption of human souls is God's work. The Psalmist states this in the forty-ninth Psalm: "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." No man can even save his own soul, either by ransom or by power. We have destroyed ourselves; but in God is our help found. We have sold ourselves for nought, and we have been redeemed without money. God had to find a ransom for us, far more costly than all the gold and silver in the world. The Divine Being, when speaking to the sons of men, on this momentous subject, says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. . . . In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."—Isa. xlv. 23, 25. In the text, Christ ascribes the great work of salvation to his Father:



hence, he says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work." In the great intercessory prayer which Christ offered, before he suffered in the garden and died upon the cross, these words are found: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. . . . I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." When he had hung upon the cross for three hours, he said, after receiving the vinegar, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Christ glorified his Father, by showing the human race that it was, and is, the will of God that men should be saved; by showing that it was through God's great love and tender mercy that he had been sent to redeem our world; and by ascribing the glory of the work of salvation to his Father, rather than to himself; and because he has done this, some have taken occasion, on this ground, to deny the Godhead of Christ. It was only occasionally that the Lord Jesus asserted his equality with the Father, and that the work of redemption was as much his work as it was the Father's. Christ seems to have wished the Jews to have been convinced of his Godhead by the works he performed, rather than by the assertions he made; and if the Jews had not been steeped in apostacy, pride, and unbelief, his works would have convinced them that he "is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." For, if the works of creation evince the eternal power and Godhead of their Creator, surely the works which Christ performed, when on earth, in his own name, and by his own authority and power, were sufficient to convince every impartial observer that he that performed them must be Immanuel—God in our nature. Christ was meek and lowly in heart, and, therefore, instead of declaring his Godhead on every occasion, he referred to his works for the manifest and undeniable proofs of his absolute Divinity. Still, however, when there was absolute necessity to assert his Godhead, he did so, in unmistakable terms. On one occasion, he said, "I and my Father are one;" for this speech the Jews were for stoning him, because he made himself God. Again he said, "Before Abraham was, I am." Here he asserts his pre-existence, his self-existence, his all-sufficiency, and his eternity. The Jews understood him to assert his supreme Godhead by this speech; for they again took up stones to stone him as a blasphemer. When before the Jewish Sanhedrim, he asserted that he was the Son of the living God; and for thus making himself equal with God, they condemned him to

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death. They who deny the supreme Godhead of Christ make common cause with the infatuated Jews, who murdered Christ for claiming an equality with the Father; and, we doubt not, if Jesus was now here, and was to assert his divinity, as he did on all occasions when he was challenged on earth, their boasted liberality and humanity would forsake them; and with maddened rage they would cry, "Away with him! away with him! Crucify him! crucify him! for he is not fit to live." Those treat Christ most unjustly and most barbarously who deny his divinity, because he, in his state of humiliation, when in the form of a servant, attributed his works to his Father more frequently than he claimed the honour of them himself. The learned John Howe, whose works seem destined to live as long as sun and moon endure, has the following remarks, in his work on "The Redeemer's tears wept over Jerusalem:—"

"How few, in comparison, have ever seen such a day as Jerusalem at this time did? made by the immediate beams of the Son of righteousness! Our Lord himself vouchsafing to be their instructor—so speaking as never man did, and with such authority as far outdid their other teachers, and astonished the hearers. In what transports did he use to leave those who heard him wheresoever he came, "wondering at the gracious words which came out of his mouth." And with what mighty and beneficial works was he wont to recommend his doctrine, shining in the glorious power, and savouring of the abundant mercy of heaven, so that every apprehensive mind might see the deity was incarnate. God was come down to treat with men, and allure them into the knowledge and love of himself. 'The word was made flesh.' What unprejudiced mind might not perceive it to be so? He was there manifested and veiled at once, both expressions are used concerning the same matter. The divine beams were somewhat obscured, but did yet shine through that veil, so that his glory was beheld as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This sun shone with a mild and benign, but still with a powerful and vivifying light. 'In him was life and that life was the light of men.'"

Though, in the text, Jesus ascribes the work of salvation to his Father, yet, we clearly perceive, that this does not militate against the Godhead of Christ: but, when carefully examined, it gives us an astonishing proof of the humility of

Jesus, and of his supreme concern to glorify his Father on the earth.

*The way in which Christ accomplished the work of our redemption, deserves special consideration.* Mankind being ignorant, guilty, and enslaved, they needed an Instructor, a Redeemer, and a Governor. Christ, therefore, appeared in the threefold character of Prophet, Priest, and King. To secure the objects contemplated by his assumption of these offices, he resolutely laboured while on the earth. The first thing he aimed at, was to instruct the people in the will of God. He strove to do this both by precept and example. The will of God, dimly shadowed forth by the light of reason, and a little more clearly revealed by the law of Moses, Christ Jesus placed in the most auspicious and commanding light. In his admirable sermon on the mount, in his matchless parables, in his pertinent remarks on the various subjects which came before him, he has given the human race a comprehensive summary of the doctrines to be believed, the duties to be performed, and the privileges to be enjoyed by all his followers. The manner of his teaching was so simple, so energetic, and so original, that the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Nicodemus, a Jewish doctor, was so attracted, both by the matter and the manner of his teaching, that he sought a private interview with him, and opened the conference by saying to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the miracles which thou doest except God be with him." Officers who were sent to apprehend Jesus, stood for a time listening to "the precious words which proceeded out of his mouth," and then returned to those that sent them without him. When asked, "Why did ye not bring him?" the only reply they gave was, "Never man spake like this man." The Saviour's discourse was so simple and interesting; yet so sublime and overwhelming, that the officers retired, unable to execute their commission. To enforce his doctrine on the attention and practice of his hearers, and to prove the divinity of his mission, he wrought a series of the most astonishing and merciful miracles that men ever witnessed. Moreover, he embodied his doctrines in his life, and gave, in his own actions, the most lucid and impressive commentary of all he taught. He exhibited in his life the majesty of truth, the beauty of holiness, the charms of benevolence; for "He knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." "He was holy, harmless, undefiled,

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and separate from sinners." He put to silence all his calumniators, by simply asking, "Which of you convinceth me of sin." Such was his unwearied benevolence, that "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease, among the people."—Matth. ix. 35.

But imparting instruction to the people was not all that Jesus came to do in this world. Those who limit his work to that of a teacher and an exemplar, rest short of the principal end of his incarnation. He came to make an atonement for our sins, as well as to enlighten our darkness—came to reconcile us to God by his death. It was clearly predicted by the prophets that he should make an atonement. Isaiah says, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."—Isa. liii. 5. Daniel declares—"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself."—Chap. ix. verse 25. Zechariah introduces Jehovah speaking thus:—"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."—Chap. xii. verse 7. Christ also declared that the great object of his mission was to make an atonement. He informed Nicodemus of this fact, when he said to him, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. 14, 15. To his disciples he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."—John xii. 32, 33. The apostles evidently understood that his death on the cross was an atonement for sin. Hence, Paul says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."—Rom. v. 10, 11. Peter, speaking of Christ, says, "Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." John declares—"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—1 John ii. 3, 4. Now, if these citations do not mean suffering the penalty due to our transgressions, that we might be pardoned, cleansed, and saved for ever, then, there is no signification in words. We must either admit that Christ has really made an atonement for sin, or we must reject the Bible altogether; for if Christ has not really made an atonement, the Bible is the guide to error, instead of being the guide to truth.

To the period when Christ would finish his atoning work, the Saviour, in his conversations with his disciples, frequently alluded. Referring to his death, on one occasion, he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with: and O how am I straitened till it be accomplished." In the seventeenth of John, he says, "Father, the hour is come." The awful period when his work must be completed now arrives. He goes forth to Gethsemane, where he endures that painful agony, which caused him, "as it were, to sweat great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." Scarcely is his agony ended, before Judas the traitor, with a band of men, seek him, and lead him away to judgment. After enduring all manner of humiliating indignities, and cruel persecutions, he is condemned to death. The Saviour, bearing his cross to the place of a skull, slowly moves toward Calvary. Jesus sinks beneath his cross, and Simon, a Cyrenian, is compelled to bear it after him. The women, attached to Christ, follow him still, weeping over his sad destiny. Arriving at the fatal spot, the blessed Saviour is nailed to the cursed tree, and lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. There the cruelty of his enemies cannot let him die unmolested. The barbarous wretches cruelly jest and bitterly mock him in his last hours; but with love stronger than death, he prays for their forgiveness. And after enduring all the horrors of crucifixion, and all the weight of God's wrath, he cried, "It is finished." Yes, blessed Redeemer, thy sufferings are ended, and the work of man's redemption is completed! Thou hast atoned for our sins;—thou hast reconciled heaven and earth;—thou hast "Blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, thou hast made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in thyself,"—Col. ii. 14, 15;—thou hast now laid a sure foundation for the hope of every

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penitent sinner, and for the confidence of every genuine saint ;  
—thou hast opened a new and living way into the holy of  
holies, by thy most precious death, so that we, poor, guilty,  
polluted, enslaved wretches, may come boldly to the throne of  
grace, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of  
need !

“ 'Tis finished !—this thy dying groan  
Shall sin of every kind atone;  
Millions shall be redeemed from death  
By this thy last expiring breath.

‘Tis finished !—Heaven is reconciled,  
And all the powers of darkness spoiled ;  
Peace, love, and happiness, again  
Return, and dwell with sinful men.

‘Tis finished !—let the joyful sound  
Be heard through all the nations round :

‘Tis finished !—let the echo fly  
Thro’ heaven and hell, thro’ earth and sky.”

But though Christ had now finished the work which his  
Father gave him to do on the earth, it is needful that the  
world should know this, and reap the benefit of his atonement.  
Therefore, he rises from the dead ; instructs his apostles what  
to do ; gives his Church the commission to preach the gospel  
to every creature ; and then he is exalted with God’s right  
hand to the mediatorial throne in heaven, where he sits a  
Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the remission  
of sins, and to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by  
him. There he still reigns, and there he must reign, till all  
enemies are put under his feet. As our king, he is waging  
war with the hosts of hell ; continually delivering men from  
their dominion, and enabling all who trust in him, to conquer  
the world, the flesh, the devil, and to lay hold on eternal life.  
For God to save us by the suffering work of Christ, Paul  
assures us is worthy of the Godhead : hence, he says, “ For  
it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all  
things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain  
of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”—Heb. ii. 10.

Consider we, then,

II. The proofs that it was the Father’s will that Christ  
should finish this glorious work of man’s redemption.

*This is evident from the predictions concerning Christ.*  
God told the serpent that the seed of the woman should bruise  
his head. Abraham received the promise that in his seed all

the families of the earth should be blessed. The Psalmist, speaking of Christ, says, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ; mine ears hast thou opened : burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart."—Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. Paul shows, in the tenth of Hebrews, that this prediction was fulfilled in Christ ; and, after quoting it, adds : "Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein ; (which are offered by the law ;) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins : But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God : From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Thus the apostle incontrovertibly proves, from the Psalmist's prediction concerning Christ, that it was the will of God that Christ should take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and perfect for ever those who are sanctified from sin through faith in that sacrifice. Jehovah, addressing Christ, says, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee ; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages ; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth ; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves."—Isa. xlix. 8, 9. Similar language is employed by Zechariah : "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion : shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy king cometh unto thee : he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off : and he shall speak peace unto the heathen : and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope : even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."—Zech. ix. 9—12. These passages

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clearly show that God gave his Son to save us through his blood, which is the blood of the covenant.

Before Jesus was born, the angel Gabriel appeared unto Mary, and said, "Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. . . . Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke i. 28—38. When the angel appeared unto Joseph, the reputed father of Christ, he gave him a reason why Christ should be called Jesus, in these words: "For he shall save his people from their sins." It is clearly evident, also, that Simeon, a just and devout man, to whom it was revealed that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ, considered that these predictions would be fulfilled in the child Jesus; for it is written, "And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at these things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel: and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day. And she coming in at that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."—Luke ii. 27—37. From these, and numerous other predictions, it is fully evident that it was the will of God that Christ should seek and save the lost souls of men.

*The attestations which God gave from heaven, when Christ commenced his work, and while engaged in its performance, fully prove that he was well pleased.* When Christ entered upon his public ministry, and received his baptism from John, (for all priests under the law had to be baptized,) "It came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."—Luke iii. 21, 22. Again, when Christ was on the mount with Peter, James, and John, when, "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. . . . There came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him."—Luke ix. 28—36. When certain Greeks came to Philip, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus;" and Jesus is informed of the wish by Andrew and Philip: we read, "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (This he said, signifying what death he should die.)"—John xii. 23—33. In both these interesting cases, when the voice was heard from heaven, the subject of discourse was the death of Christ. Moses and Elias talk with Jesus of his decease at Jerusalem, when the voice is heard on the mount: and Christ is speaking of his death to the Greeks and to his disciples, when the

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voice is heard for the third time. This testimony from heaven abundantly proves that Jesus was doing the will of God, by labouring and dying for the salvation of our lost race.

*The greatest proof of this truth was reserved till after the glorification of the Son of God.* When Christ was glorified, then God sent down the Holy Spirit to render efficient the means which Jesus had appointed for the regeneration of our race. And by the operations of the Holy Spirit, the first preachers of the gospel wrought wonders. Under their preaching, thousands were converted; for they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following; "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all;" "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (See the ii. and iv. chapters of Acts.) If it had not been the will of God that Christ should redeem us, by his mediation, God would not have sanctioned and so abundantly blessed the first preachers of Christ crucified. They might have preached, but no signs of supernatural power would have attended their word; for God can never sanction and bless, though he may permit, that which is displeasing to him. In the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul shows that men have no excuse for rejecting the gospel, seeing that God has so strikingly borne witness to its truth; and that those who neglect it, can no more escape punishment than did the Jews who disobeyed the law: his words are, "For if the words spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."—Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4. In short, we have now a standing proof, in the conversion of men to God through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus, that it was Jehovah's will that Jesus should live and die for our salvation; for wherever the pure gospel is preached with simplicity and fervour, God owns that gospel in the conversion of men from the error of their ways. All converted men have the witness in themselves that the will of God is their salvation through the death and intercession of the Lord Jesus. These thoughts might be greatly amplified; but we must hasten to consider,

III. The supreme concern and constant care of Christ to do the will, and finish the work of his Father, afford the best example for Christians to follow in the discharge of their duties to the souls of men.

The supreme concern and constant care of Christ to do the will, and finish the work of his Father, are implied in the words, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." By this statement, we are not to understand that Christ did not need any food to support his body, or that he was not in want of food at this time. His body as much needed temporal food, for its sustenance, as ours do; and at this time he was both hungry and thirsty. This is evident, from his sending his disciples into the city to buy meat, and from his asking for water to drink of the woman of Samaria. By this expression we must understand that Jesus was more intent upon doing the will of his Father, than he was about satisfying his own bodily wants. He hungered more, he thirsted more, for the salvation of souls, than he did for meat and drink. The supreme concern and constant care of Christ to do the will, and finish the work of his Father, was evident through the whole of his eventful life.

*He evidenced his supreme anxiety to do the will of God when very young.* It is not much that we find in the Bible concerning the childhood, youth, and manhood of Jesus. Until he commences his public ministry, which he did when he was about thirty years of age, little is said of Jesus; but what is said must convince us that in his youth it was his meat to do the will of his Father. In Luke's gospel we are informed, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in Spirit, and filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." At the age of twelve years he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover. After the feast was over, his parents returned; but Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem. And what did he tarry behind for, think you, young friends? Was it because he did not wish to be subject to his parents? or was it because he wanted to see the fine sights in Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea? or was it, think you, because he wished to be doing some mischief, which his parents would not allow, as many boys of his age would have done? Oh, no! none of these things caused him to tarry behind. He tarried to do the will of his Father in heaven. When his parents returned to seek him, "They found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished

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at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist (knew) ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—Luke ii. 46—49. O that the yong now present would copy the example of Jesus, by serving God in their youthful days! Nearly all that have been eminent for Biblical knowledge, for holiness, and for usefulness in the world, began to serve God in their early days. Your preacher would not hold the office he now sustains, and which he has filled since he was twenty years of age, if he had not made religion his choice, and the cause of God his cause, at the age of thirteen years. And while this evening he calls to remembrance some of his youthful companions, who would not serve God in their youth, who have blasted their characters, and some of them lost their lives through a course of sin, he would most earnestly and affectionately invite you to begin at once to live to please God, and to copy the example of Jesus, who at twelve years of age entered on his Father's business. To those young friends who have embraced religion, we would say, study to be useful, try to be useful, pray to be useful in the salvation of the souls of men, and many souls shall you save from death.

*Christ evidenced his supreme concern to do the will, and finish the work of his Father, by the long journeys he took, and the many privations he endured, for the purpose of instructing and blessing the sons of men.* He did not reside constantly in Nazareth, waiting for the people to come to him for advice and aid; but he went about doing good. He journeyed on foot, beneath the scorching rays of an eastern sun, from place to place, to seek and to save those that were lost. In these journeys, he was often for a long period without food; for though he wrought miracles to supply the wants of others, yet he depended on the bounty of men for the supply of his own temporal wants. Sometimes he met with the greatest kindness, and had unremitting attention paid to the supply of his necessities. In Bethany, he was invariably kindly received, and hospitably entertained by Lazarus and his sisters. Martha was so anxious about the supply of his temporal wants, that he was obliged to give her a gentle reproof, because she was careful to provide him *many things*, when only *one thing* was needed. In many other places, however, he was houseless, and none cared for his necessities. This

was so frequently the case, that Jesus said to one, who expressed a wish to become his follower, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Now, what but a supreme concern to do the will of God, and a quenchless desire to save immortal souls, either could, or would, have induced the Lord of life and glory to live on earth a life of such abject poverty? Well might the apostle of the Gentiles say, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—2 Cor. viii. 9.

*Jesus manifested his supreme concern to do the will of his Father in his constant readiness to instruct and save all who heard him, and who desired instruction and salvation.* Whenever any came to him for instruction and aid, he never turned a deaf ear to their requests. All the diseased who came to him obtained the desire of their hearts; for he healed them. Fathers who sought his aid for their sons—mothers who implored his help for their daughters, who were afflicted with devils, had their requests always granted. He rejected not the approaches of harlots, publicans, and the vilest of sinners; but when they drew near for to hear him, he received them with condescending kindness, felt for them the greatest compassion, and with all the sweetness of benevolence, bestowed upon them salvation. So good was he to the outcasts, that "The scribes and pharisees murmured, saying, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.'" When thousands drew near to hear him, he would sit for whole days together, instructing them in spiritual and eternal things, and then retire at night to the mountains; not to sleep, but to pray.

"Cold mountains and the midnight air,  
Witnessed the fervour of his prayer."

Christ was not only ready to deprive himself of rest, when thousands came to hear him; but he would do this for the sake of individuals. He must have spent the greater part of one night with Nicodemus, conversing with him on the all-important subjects of the new-birth, and the extent and design of the love of God in sending his Son into the world. And in reference to the woman of Samaria, he shows his supreme concern to do the will of his Father. Fatigued as he was with his long walk from Judea, hungry and thirsty as he was, he converses with her until he has secured the conversion of her soul; and he takes no refreshment until he has preached the word of God to the Samaritans, who are brought to him

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by the woman. Here we see that it was his meat to do his Father's will, and to finish his work.

*His supreme concern to do his Father's will is also evident from the amazing sufferings which he so patiently endured.* Christ would never have humbled himself; nor have groaned in the garden till the blood gushed through the pores of his skin; nor have allowed himself to be apprehended as a common malefactor; nor have endured the buffetings, mockings, insults, and scoffings of an infuriated mob, and of malicious judges; nor have submitted to the unjust condemnation pronounced upon him by the Jewish High Priest and the Roman governor; nor would he have gone like a lamb to the slaughter, if it had not been his meat to do the will of his Father, and finish his work. These sufferings he could have avoided—his enemies he could have baffled—their lives he could have taken away in a moment; but it was the will of his Father that he should endure these unparalleled sufferings, in order to save us from endless woe. The voluntary character of his sufferings stands forth prominently in the word of God: hence, it is said, "He humbled himself; He gave himself; He laid down his life of himself, no man having power to take it from him; He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." All the men on earth, and all the devils in hell, combined, could not have caused Christ to suffer, if he had not been willing to suffer; for he was possessed of infinite wisdom and power, and could, with a single word, have destroyed them all. But then how could the will of God be accomplished in our salvation?

*The supreme concern of Christ to do the will of his Father in our redemption, is evident in the death he died.* The Saviour, on one occasion, said, "The life is more than meat." Good men eat to live: they do not live to eat. But though the life is more than meat, yet Jesus gave up his life for the salvation of the souls of men. Death, under any form, is painful to think of; inasmuch as it is the penalty of transgression. But Jesus died the most accursed death, even the death of the cross. None but slaves, movers of sedition, murderers, and the worst kind of malefactors, ever died a death so lingering, so cruel, so shameful, as that of crucifixion. This horrid death, under circumstances which no other being ever was placed in, Christ suffered. He had not only to endure the physical pains which crucifixion produces; but his holy soul was tormented by devils. He was mocked, derided, and abused, as he hung upon the cross, by those very men whom



he had, while living, blessed ; and now, while dying, prays for. He was forsaken of his Father, and left to endure the vengeance due to sin, without divine support and consolation. This produced such agony, such overwhelming horror, that he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" or as it would be, if more correctly rendered, "My God, my God, to what hast thou left me?" Jesus endured all this to do the will of God, and to finish the work of our redemption, which God had planned as early as the fall of the human race, if not before. These evidences must convince every honest mind that it was the supreme concern and constant care of Christ to do his Father's will, and finish his work.

Now, my Christian friends, we have here an example, a perfect example, worthy the imitation of us all, in our efforts to save souls. It is as much the will of God that we should labour to save souls, as it was his will that Christ his Son should live and die for their salvation. Our labours will never merit their salvation—Christ's death alone is the meritorious cause of the salvation of souls ; but our labours, our example, our intercessions, if they are what they should be, will lead our fellow-men to Christ, for that great salvation which he purchased with his own blood. Can we find a more perfect example for us to follow, in the salvation of souls, than this which Christ has left us? It is impossible. There was no cessation nor intermission in the Redeemer's labours for the present and eternal salvation of immortal souls. This example we are bound to follow. The example of Christ, in his unwearied labours to save souls, we are as much bound to imitate, as we are bound to imitate the example of truth, justice, purity, humility, and patience, which he has left us. Thornton justly observes: "If Christianity implies the possession of the 'Spirit of Christ Jesus,' it necessarily follows, that every trait which characterized the Saviour, should distinguish his followers, and that the feature most prominent in him should be so in them. Consequently, if love to souls was developed more strikingly in the Redeemer than any other attribute, we conceive that it may be fairly assumed that this ought to be the most conspicuous trait in any genuine disciple of the truth. There is reason to fear that love to souls has too generally been considered as a shining gift, rather than a necessary grace ; as an absolute prerequisite in constituting the character of a minister, or a missionary, but

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not of a private Christian ; or, if it has been admitted as an indispensable qualification, it has been considered as a latent principle, to be called into exercise occasionally, and under extraordinary circumstances, rather than an ever-active principle, in constant and uniform operation. Now, we contend, from the example of Jesus Christ, love to souls is as essential in the constitution of every Christian character, as repentance or faith ; that it is one branch of that charity, concerning which Paul declares, ‘ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal.’ Charity, if it exists in the human bosom, is a divine flame kindled from on high, that not only rises to its native heaven, but expands on earth, and diffuses far and wide its holy light and genial warmth ; it is seen the most brilliantly and felt the most powerfully in the Church ; but it sends its kindly rays forth into a cold and benighted world. This is the only atmosphere in which God and man can meet and live. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. The love to the brethren, which is insisted on in scripture, is a holy affection, not only exercised from one Christian to another, but from all Christians towards their common brotherhood, the whole family of man. We are to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to love even our enemies as ourselves ; to pray for their conversion, and try to lead them to that cross where they will be reconciled to God and to ourselves : this is the widest expanse of Christian charity.”

We think none can question that it is our duty to copy the example of Christ, in unwearied labours to save the souls of men. We profess to be actuated by the spirit of Jesus, and to tread in his steps. Suffer us then to ask, Is it our meat to do the will of our Father in heaven, by seeking the salvation of souls ? Do we hunger and thirst as much after an opportunity of doing good to the souls of men, as we do for necessary food ? Are we willing to suffer the loss of all things, yea, to yield up life itself, if required, to promote the salvation of immortal souls ? If we are not, we do not possess the mind of Christ, nor are we following the example which he has left us. Oh ! that as professing Christians, we were like Christ our Master ; then the salvation of souls would be more desired than life itself. Immortal souls are perishing by hundreds, and thousands, and millions, every year—perishing for the lack of knowledge—dropping into hell because they know nothing of Christ ; yet, many who

name the name of Christ, and as indifferent about their salvation as the stones in the street. There are many who call themselves Christians who will not spare one hour from business, nor from pleasure, nor from sleep, to save a soul from death; who will not give a pound, nor a shilling, to pluck men as brands from the burning; who will not go the length of a mile to recover an immortal soul from the snare of the devil; who will not even utter a word of instruction, nor of reproof, nor of entreaty, to save men from the vengeance of eternal fire!!! Do you ask them to labour in any way for the salvation of souls, they are full of excuses! Do you ask them to give, to support others while labouring, they will either refuse, or give you the lowest possible sum! O where is the constraining love of Jesus! Does it dwell, can it dwell, in the hearts of those who shut up their bowels of compassion from their fellow-men, and who will not put themselves the least out of the way to save immortal souls from death? Impossible. They are not actuated by the Spirit—they are not filled with the love of Jesus, whose meat it was to do the will of his Father, and finish his work.

Brethren and sisters in Christ, few of us do what we can for the souls of our perishing fellow-men. There are numbers in our neighbourhoods whom we have never warned of the evil and danger of sin, and whom we have never pointed to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Shall they perish at our very doors, without an effort to save them? Shall they perish without any sympathy, any compassion, any help from us? God forbid! Let us copy the example of Jesus. Instead of taking mortals for our exemplars in the great work of saving souls, let us steadily fix our eyes on "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." If it be a cross for us to reprove sinners, to instruct sinners, to converse with them on spiritual things, to give a reason of the hope that is in us, let us take up that cross, and copy the example of Jesus, by enduring it, and despising the shame of it. Remember Jesus says, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." We know that personal effort for the salvation of souls is a great trial, a great cross to many private Christians; but that trial must be endured, that cross must be borne, or the favour of God will be withdrawn, the love of Christ will be extinguished, and the communion of the Holy Spirit will be broken off. We warn you professed followers

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of Jesus this day, IF YOU WILL NOT COPY THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS, IN UNWEARIED EFFORTS TO SAVE SOULS, YOU WILL, YOU MUST, BE CLASSED WITH THE WICKED AND SLOTHFUL SERVANT, WHO HID HIS LORD'S MONEY, AND YOU MUST EXPECT TO SHARE HIS PUNISHMENT.

*Before we close this service, we observe, that this subject reads an awful lesson to the unconverted.* You are careless about the salvation of your own souls, for which Jesus suffered so much, to redeem you from sin, and satan, and the bottomless pit. Christ felt such love to your souls, that he died the death of the cross, to save them; but you think nothing about this salvation. You seldom think what you are and where you are going. Now, depend upon this, if you are not exposed to eternal damnation, Jesus Christ would never have suffered, wept, bled, and died for your salvation; for no temporal consideration whatever can compensate the Redeemer for the agonies, the tortures, and the death which he endured for you. Your souls are infinitely valuable, and are in danger of being eternally lost, or Christ would not have died to redeem them. Remember, ye unconverted, you will shortly have to meet Christ as your judge, and if you *now* neglect the great salvation, which he purchased with his own blood, He will *then* show you no mercy. He may possibly weep over your destruction, as he did over the doom of infatuated Jerusalem; but his word, and the office he sustains, will require him to cast you into outer darkness. Think of the tremendous evils of being cast into outer darkness, and fly to Jesus for mercy, before it be too late. Whether Christians perform *their duty* to your souls or not, it is *your duty, your privilege, your interest* to "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

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## DISCOURSE XVII.

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### THE JOY OF THE LORD THE CHRISTIAN'S STRENGTH, IN THE ARDUOUS WORK OF SAVING SOULS.

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"Neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."—  
Nehemiah viii. 10.

In this chapter we have an interesting account of the conduct of the people of God after their return from Babylonish captivity. All the people gathered themselves together, as one man, into the street that was before the water gate, and they spake unto Ezra the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Ezra brought forth the sacred volume, and standing upon a pulpit of wood, surrounded by his brethren of the Aaronic priesthood, "he read therein from morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." The reading of the law was accompanied with prayer: "And Ezra blessed the LORD the great God: and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord, with their faces to the ground." The reading was followed by expositions of the law; for the Priests and the Levites "caused the people to understand the law." It is stated, "So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

When the people heard the law read and expounded, they wept to think how they had violated that law, offended their God, and exposed themselves to his wrathful indignation. When Nehemiah saw they were truly penitent, he at once commanded them to cease weeping, saying, "This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not nor weep: for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be

ye sorry, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Instead of allowing them to weep, as persons who were doomed to death, he commands them to rejoice, as persons whom God had forgiven, and upon whom he was showering his blessings. Their joy must be exhibited in a feast; but the feast must be a religious one. They are to eat the fat, and drink the sweet; but they must do this with charity to the poor, by sending them a portion of their good things, to make them glad; and they must keep this feast with piety and devotion; for the joy of the Lord is their strength. "Let it not be," says the judicious Henry, "a carnal, sensual joy, but holy and spiritual, the *joy of the Lord*, joy in the goodness of God, under the conduct and government of the grace of God; joy arising from our interest in the love and favour of God, and the tokens of his favour. This joy will be your strength; therefore encourage it."

Nehemiah, and the priests of God in his day, did not think that much sorrow was requisite to make the people steadfast in the covenant of God, as some in our day foolishly imagine. Many, now-a-days, never think of comforting a poor penitent, until he has for weeks or months drank of the wormwood and the gall; but they seem bent upon driving a penitent to despair, before presenting him with the cup of salvation, and inviting him to partake of the rich consolations of the gospel. These parties are highly mistaken, as to the manner in which penitents should be dealt with. Whenever a sinner's heart is truly broken for sin—when he weeps at having broken the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, then, as soon as possible, we should direct him to the blood that makes the wounded whole; remembering, that it is not the *terror of the Lord*, but the *joy of the Lord* which strengthens a man, and enables him to do the will of God.

Those persons also greatly err who suppose that religion is a gloomy thing, or that some degree of gloom is essential to the preservation of religion. The Bible assures us that religion is a joyous thing, and that its joy is the conservator of its existence. The text, and many other passages, abundantly prove this. The joy of the Lord is your strength, not your weakness.

Under the series of discourses we have delivered, pointing out the obligations of Christians to seek the salvation of souls, we have all felt much sorrow, because we have not been so faithful to the trust reposed in us by the Saviour as we ought to have been; and because we have not been so useful to the

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souls of men as we should have been, if we had been faithful stewards of the mysteries of the kingdom. We doubt not but they have caused great searchings of heart, and made us mourn and weep, as did the Jews, in Nehemiah's day ; but we must not be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Our grief should lead us to the throne of grace, for forgiveness, and then it must be discontinued : if it be excessive, and long-continued, it will unfit us for the service of God, in the great work of saving souls. If we have seen our error, in having too much neglected the salvation of souls : if we have confessed our unfaithfulness, with godly sorrow : if we have implored forgiveness, in the name of Christ, and have obtained it, then let us rejoice, and cheerfully address ourselves to the great work of saving souls from death, and hiding multitudes of sins. Mourning and weeping over the past will now effect nothing in the salvation of souls. We may sit down and weep ourselves to death, on account of our past unfaithfulness, and not save a single soul from ruin by so doing. Our business is to be more diligent in future ; and if we would perform our duty to the souls of the unconverted, we must be full of joy ; for the joy of the Lord is our strength. The great cause of our failure in duty, in past days, has been the want of the joy of the Lord ; for joy in God is the cause of success in the work of saving souls. We must be happy, in order to be useful. This is the subject of our present discourse. In discussing this subject, let us consider,

I. The joy of the Lord.

II. Its utility in the great work of saving souls.

I. The joy of the Lord.

The joy of the Lord sometimes means the joy of the heavenly state, which we hope that you will possess, when the duties of this life are performed : when you have finished your earthly course. The faithful servant of God, when he rests from his labours, is addressed in these words, " Well done, good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The measure and duration of that joy we cannot form an adequate conception of ; for, " In God's presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." This joy believers, at death, *enter into* ; but the joy that is spoken of in the text is that which *enters into them*, while they live in a world

which is full of sorrow. It is not much of the joy of the Lord that we can now hold, but as much as we can contain we may have ; for God *can fill us* with peace and joy through believing ; and notwithstanding the little of the joy of the Lord our hearts can contain, while encased in flesh, we nevertheless can hold sufficient of it to make us both unspeakably happy and abundantly useful.

*By the joy of the Lord, we are to understand that gladness which the Lord imparts to the soul.* Joy has been described as " that vivid pleasure which is inspired by the immediate reception of something peculiarly grateful, of something obviously productive of essential advantage, or of something which promises to contribute to our present and future well-being. The delight may be communicated by our liberation from our fearful apprehensions, or from a state of actual distress : by obtaining some new addition to our stock of enjoyment : or by the full assurance of these, without any mixture of doubt." Now do you not see how well and how fully this delineation of joy applies to the circumstances of the real Christian, whom, having embraced the gospel of Christ, God has filled with joy ? From what fearful apprehensions, appalling dangers, and heart-rending distress has God delivered him. He has delivered him from the curse of the law, the burden of sin, the slavery of the devil, the accusations of an evil conscience, and the dread forebodings of eternal damnation. God has reconciled him to himself, by the death of his Son : has forgiven him his iniquities, and covered his transgressions : has given him not " the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father : " has given him, through Christ, " access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The joy and gladness felt when God delivered us from the powers of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, is what is termed in our text the joy of the Lord.

*It is the joy of the Lord, inasmuch as he is the author of it.* Who, save the almighty God, can deliver us from our guilt, pollution, misery, and danger ? Who, save God, can give us the inestimable blessings of pardon, adoption, liberty, and the hope of glory, from which this joy proceeds ? Who, save God, can give us the full assurance, the clear and decisive evidence that our sins are forgiven us, and that our names are written in heaven, which is absolutely essential to the existence of spiritual, rational, elevated joy ? None.

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Until God's anger is removed from us, and we have the assurance that he has accepted us in the beloved, we are wretched and miserable. Men may try to make us glad, under such circumstances, but they must labour in vain. "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only." Job xxxiv. 29. "Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now would it be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me."—Job vi. 2-4. God is the giver of that joy which is spiritual, satisfying, and enduring. This the Scripture plainly, positively, frequently asserts. Solomon says, "God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy."—Eccles. ii. 26. The Psalmist says, "Thou hast made him exceeding glad with the light of thy countenance."—Psalm xxi. 6. "There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time their corn and their wine increased."—Psalm iv. 6, 7. Paul prays, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."—Romans xviii. 13. These citations abundantly prove that God is the author of the joy that is worth having. When he giveth joy, then we can say, with Isaiah, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me."—c. xii. v. 1. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels."—c. lxi. v. 10.

*It is the joy of the Lord, inasmuch as he is the subject of it.* We not only receive joy from God, but he is the sole object of all religious joy. To a converted mind, the gifts, the graces, the mercies, the ordinances of God are not so much the objects of gladness as God himself is the object of it. It is in God that the renewed soul specially delights, and it is for the enjoyment of God that the gracious soul ardently longs. This is clearly evident from the Bible. David says,

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."—Psalm lxxiii. 1. Again, he says, "Then will I go unto the altar of my God, unto *God my exceeding joy*: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God."—Psalm iv. 3, 4. And again, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of *him* shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."—Psalm civ. 34. Paul says, "We also *joy in God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."—Romans v. 11. Peter, writing to those who had never seen Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh, says, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—1 Peter i. 8. The nature, the perfections, the works, and ways of God afford unspeakable delight to the renewed mind. The manner in which the Godhead is revealed to us in the Bible affords untold pleasure to the pious mind: we can contemplate the Godhead in its unity, and in its trinity in unity, with exceeding joy. While we behold one God, infinitely perfect and glorious, we discover three persons in that one God, who, by a trinity of operations, accomplish a threefold work, in which the glory of the Godhead and the happiness of humanity are secured. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all engaged to secure one grand object, the salvation of the soul. O how delightful it is to contemplate the Father designing the plan of salvation—the Son executing the plan of salvation—the Holy Spirit applying the benefits of salvation to the humble and contrite. Take another view. How delightful it is to have access to the Father—through the sacrifice of the Son—by the power of the Holy Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us. Think, again, how delightful it is to have in our souls the triad of blessings spoken of in these words, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." The trinity of the Godhead meets us at every step, in the work of our redemption; and the oneness of the Godhead is abundantly manifested in the unity of purpose, the unity of effort, and the unity of result, which, from first to last, are apparent in the work of redemption. The study of God, thus manifested, will afford us unspeakable joy in this world, and eternal joy in the next.

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Think, too, of the joy which communion with God ever affords. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ." The Comforter, also, who is the Holy Ghost, dwelleth in us. This blessed fellowship with the triune God, we could easily show from the Scriptures, if we had time, embraces *a participation of the Divine nature, unrestricted and frequent intercourse, community of interest, and mutual possession.* The possession of the Divine nature, intercourse with God by prayer, the oneness of interest between us and the blessed God, our possession of Jehovah and all that he has, and his full possession of our bodies, spirits, and all that belongs to us, afford to our minds unspeakable joy. Then, again, the constant, feeling sense of Jehovah's presence, love, and protection fills with joy indelible. To feel that the Lord is within us, that he is our portion, that his love is ours, that all our concerns are under his guidance, that all his resources are employed for our good, that all his powers are exerted for our comfort, support, and defence, is joy indeed: yea, this is the quintessence of joy. God himself is the exceeding joy of his people.

*It is the joy of the Lord, inasmuch as he is the preserver of it.* Neither men, nor devils, nor worldly calamities, can rob us of this joy which the Lord imparts, so long as we put our trust under the shadow of his wings. The following blessed statements ought to be familiar to every Christian: "Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Isaiah xii. 2, 3. "The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass?"—Ib. li. 11, 12. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."—Ib. liv. 10. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God," to the wicked, "Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of

heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."—Ib. lxvi. 13, 14. Jesus said to his disciples: "And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh away from you."—John xvi. 22. Of the apostles it is said, "And they departed from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."—Acts v. 41. "And when they had laid many stripes upon them," Paul and Silas, "they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."—Ib. xvi. 23, 25. Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "And now behold I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing what shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth, in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."—Ib. xx. 22-24. Writing to the Galatians and Romans, he says, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ."—2 Cor. i. 3-5. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in

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Christ Jesus our Lord."—Romans viii. 33–39. If no creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, surely no creature shall separate us from the joy of the Lord. The mass of evidence we have now brought before you proves that God is the preserver of the joy he imparts, and that no creature can destroy it. The passages from Isaiah and John show that God promises to preserve this joy. The passages from the Acts of the Apostles show fully that God did enable his servants to rejoice in the midst of their afflictions and bitter persecutions, with joy unspeakable; while the passages from the Corinthians and the Romans prove, that God comforts his people often, through his ministers; and that it is the highest folly either for men or devils to think of disturbing, to say nothing of destroying, the love, peace, and joy of those to whom God speaks peace, and in whose hearts is established the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

*It is the joy of the Lord, inasmuch as rejoicing in him is the duty he enjoins upon us.* "Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." There is no duty in the Bible stated in plainer terms, and more frequently reiterated, than that which enjoins us to rejoice in our God. Listen to a few of those commands. The Psalmist says, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright."—Psalm xxxii. 1. "O clap your hands, all ye people; and shout unto God with the voice of triumph."—Ib. xlvii. 1. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their king."—Ib. cxlix. 2. Joel says, "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things. . . . Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God."—Joel ii. 21, 23. Zephaniah says, "Sing, O daughter of Zion: shout, O Israel: be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments; he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."—Zeph. iii. 14, 16. The blessed Redeemer says, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad;



for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets before you."—Matt. v. 11, 12. When the seventy returned with joy, saying, " Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. He said unto them, I beheld satan fall as lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."—Luke x. 17-21. Here it is plain, that having our names written in heaven is a far greater cause of rejoicing than having power to cast out devils ; so that all God's people may rejoice ; for they have all their names written in heaven. Just before his crucifixion, at the last supper, Jesus said to his disciples, " Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—John xvi. 24. If, then, we are not full of joy, it is because we ask not in Jesus' name. Paul, writing to the Philippians, says, " Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say rejoice."—c. iv. v. 4. To the Thessalonians, he says, " Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.—1 Ephes. v. 16-18. Peter says, " Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you : But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also, with exceeding joy."—Peter iv. 12, 13. The infinitely blessed God desires us to be abundantly happy ; therefore he thus earnestly and repeatedly commands us to rejoice. These commands are as binding upon us the commands " Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not covet." When we see so many unhappy professors of religion around us, we would hardly suppose that there were so many commands in the word of God, addressed to believers, on the matter of rejoicing. The joy of the Lord may be experienced in all places, at all times, under all circumstances ; for it is independent of them, inasmuch as God is the giver, the object, and the preserver of it. These commands may be obeyed by us all. None of us are placed in more trying circumstances than Habbakkuk was, when he said, " Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock

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shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and make me to walk upon my high places."—Hab. iii. 17—19. "The first of these verses most nervously paints the desolate state of Judea during the captivity; and the two following verses contain the finest display of the prophet's resignation, confidence, and holy triumph in the God of his salvation. He saw that the evil, which the Spirit of God enabled him to paint in all its calamitous circumstances, was at hand and unavoidable; he submitted to this dispensation of Providence, and confided in His mercy and goodness." We cannot be placed in more calamitous circumstances than the apostles of our Lord were; yet they obeyed the commands we have quoted, and rejoiced always in God. They gloried in tribulation. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Let us perform this duty.

*The joy of the Lord, you perceive, differs widely from that carnal joy which the ungodly possess. They rejoice when their sensual appetites are gratified, when their worldly substance increases, when their fame is extended. All such joy is unsatisfying in its nature, is liable to perpetual interruptions, and will soon end in eternal misery; but the joy of the saint is vastly different. It is independent of all worldly things: for it is the joy of the Lord; and nothing can deprive us of it but wilful sin. It is a solid and substantial joy, which will serve us when all outward things conspire to make us wretched.*

" Though waves and storms go o'er my head,  
Tho' strength, and health, and friends be gone;  
Though joys be withered all, and dead;  
Though every comfort be withdrawn;  
On this my steadfast soul relies,  
Father, thy mercy never dies."

It is satisfying in its nature; for it makes us unspeakably happy. When we receive the joy of the Lord, then

" Exults our rising soul,  
Disburden'd of her load,  
And swells unutterably full  
Of glory and of God."

But, above all, it is a permanent joy; for while we enjoy the salvation of God, we cannot be destitute of the joy of his salvation. It may be lost by sin; for David, by sinning,

did lose it ; and prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." If we avoid sin, God will never deprive us of his joy ; but he will continue it unto us as long as we live : and we may also triumphantly say, "Thou wilt show unto me the path of life : in thy presence there is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Psalm xvi. 11.

Consider,

II. The utility of the joy of the Lord in the great work of saving souls.

*The salvation of souls requires great strength.* A weak or sickly Christian cannot be very successful in saving the souls of his fellow-men ; but a man strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, will accomplish wonders. All that we want, as Christians, to enable us to do the will of God in the salvation of men, is more strength of soul. Nehemiah positively declares, in the text, that the joy of the Lord is our strength. *Joy in God will afford us the strength we need.* Solomon says, "A merry heart doeth good as a medicine ; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." The truth of this proverb is often seen in the common walks of life. A person of a cheerful, happy disposition, though heavily afflicted, soon recovers from sickness, by the use of proper means ; whereas, a person whose spirit is broken, no medicine can heal, no balm can restore. And it is so in grace. A melancholy saint is ever weak, but a joyous believer is ever strong. To a melancholy Christian the mole-hill is a mountain, the grasshopper is a burden, the least trial sinks him in despair ; but a Christian who is truly happy in God can bear with ease those trials which completely overwhelm the desponding saint. A desponding Christian, in the midst of trials, will be found making his melancholy complaint in language something like the following : "My trials and afflictions are greater than I can bear, my duties are more than I can perform, my enemies are too many for me. I shall one day fall ; and I am afraid that after all my profession, I shall come short of heaven at last." But a happy Christian will be heard to say, "Bless the Lord, though I have many trials and heavy afflictions, yet my soul is so happy in God that I scarcely feel them ; for as the sufferings abound, the consolations also abound. The duties I have to perform are not grievous ; for it is my meat to do the will of God. My enemies sometimes

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thrust sore at me, that I may fall ; but the Lord helps me, and having received help of God, I continue to this day. I know my sins are pardoned. I have the presence of the Lord with me. I know that if my earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; and I reckon, with Paul, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in me. Bless the Lord, O my soul : and all that is within me bless his holy name." This striking difference between the experience of a desponding professor and a joyous saint we have often witnessed. Now, we ask, which of the two will be most likely to be successful in saving souls ? The desponding saint has too much to do to think of himself, ever to think about the salvation of others. Selfish are his thoughts, his feelings, and his aims. He is too miserable to think of doing any good to the souls of his fellow-men. "What shall I do ? O how miserable I am ! What will become of me ?" is the burden of his cry from year's end to year's end. To all such we would say, Give up your selfishness, and begin to labour for the salvation of others, and you will both find joy of soul and strength to save others ; but while you think so much of self, and so little about others, you will remain strangers to joy, and you will never perform your duty to the souls of your fellow-men. The joyous Christian, on the other hand, is found saying, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me ? What can I do to bring men to adore, and love, and serve my God ? I cannot do too much for Jesus, who has done so much for me. I will try to love him more and serve him better than I have hitherto done."

*The joy of the Lord makes us strong to labour for God, in the salvation of souls.* You all know that when a person is happy in his mind, he will do as much work again, of a manual kind, than he ever does when his mind is troubled and cast down. A miserable man feels every kind of labour painful and irksome. So it is in religion. A happy Christian has a mind to work for God ; and he proceeds to do his will with alacrity and delight. The joy of the Lord is like oil to the wheels of his obedience. He labours for God, because he loves him ; therefore he feels the utmost pleasure in doing his will. He labours for God, because he is grateful to him for what he has done for him. Love and gratitude are the principles which constrain him to labour for God in

the salvation of souls. His labours, therefore, are the willing, prompt, spontaneous labours of the grateful and happy child, done to please a kind and tender parent ; and not the reluctant service and tormenting drudgery of the slave, performed through fear of a tyrant. The language of the man who possesses much of the joy of the Lord is :

“ Where shall my wondering soul begin ?  
How shall I all to heaven aspire ?  
A slave redeem'd from death and sin,  
A brand pluck'd from eternal fire ;  
How shall I equal triumphs raise,  
Or sing my great Deliverer's praise ?

O how shall I the goodness tell,  
Father, which thou to me hast show'd ?  
That I a child of wrath and hell,  
I should be called a child of God :  
Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,  
Blest with this antepast of heaven.

And shall I slight my Father' love ?  
Or basely fear his gifts to own ?  
Unmindful of his favours prove ?  
Shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,  
Refuse his righteousness to impart,  
By hiding it within my heart ?”

His soul indignantly casts out the wicked thought ; and in right good earnest he begins to invite sinners to come to Jesus, to believe in Jesus, to love, adore, and serve Jesus, assuring them that he will receive them, pardon them, purify them, yea, save them to the uttermost. Such a man will do more for God, in the salvation of souls, than hundreds of those who are only servants of God, not children of God, and who serve God from slavish fear, instead of serving him from love : for their service will ever be reluctant, partial, and imperfect. It was the joy of the Lord which sent forth the apostle Paul to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and which sustained him “ In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness ;” yea, which sustained him “ in all his perils, in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oftener,” than any of the apostles. When writing to the Philippians, he says, “ Yea, and if I be offered up on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me.” Parkhurst well remarks, that “ The apostle compares the faith of the Philippians to the sacrificial victim, and his

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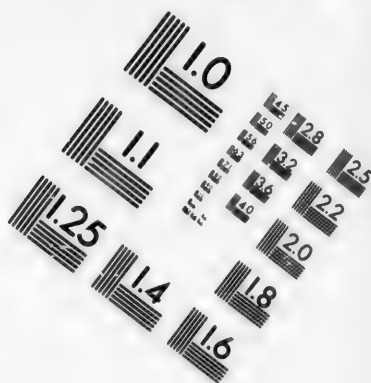
own blood shed in martyrdom to the *libation*, that is, the wine poured out, on occasion of the sacrifice." And is martyrdom in itself a cause of joy? We conceive not; but the joy of the Lord made Paul rejoice in the thought of shedding his blood in the cause of God, and in the work of saving souls. The joy of the Lord was the impassioned Whitfield's strength, when he said, "I want more tongues, more bodies, more souls, for the Lord Jesus. Had I ten thousand, he should have them all. Oh for power equal to my will! I would fly from pole to pole, publishing the everlasting gospel of the Son of God." The joy of the Lord was the holy Fletcher's strength, when he used to run after his wicked parishoners, who would run from him, and faithfully warn them of their danger, and tenderly "beseech them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." The joy of the Lord was the zealous Grimshaw's strength when he said to his friends, who, in tenderness to his health, pressed him to spare himself, "Let me alone now; I shall have rest enough by and by. I cannot do enough for Christ, who has done so much for me." The joy of the Lord was the indefatigable Wesley's strength, while he travelled, and preached, and wrote to "Revive, enforce, and defend the pure, apostolical doctrines and practices of the primitive church: which he continued to do by his writings and labours for more than half a century: and, to his inexpressible joy, not only beheld their influences extending, and their efficacy witnessed in the hearts and lives of many thousands, as well in the western world as in these kingdoms; but also, far above all human power or expectation, lived to see provision made, by the singular grace of God, for their continuance and establishment, to the joy of future generations."\* We again declare, that a Christian happy in God will do more for the salvation of souls than hundreds of those who attempt to serve God through slavish, tormenting fear. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

*The joy of the Lord produces a strong determination to save souls.* The man who is happy in God feels the constraining love of Christ, and sees the absolute necessity of his fellow-creatures being brought to Christ, that they may be raised from the dead, and be made to sit with Christ Jesus in heavenly places. He, being spiritual, judges, with the apostle Paul, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead. "All dead." "All dead! a world in ruin! What a field of slaughter!"

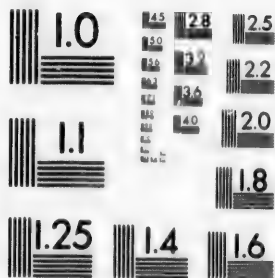
\* Whitehead's Life of Wesley, page 544.



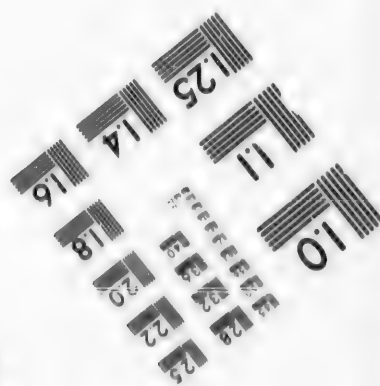
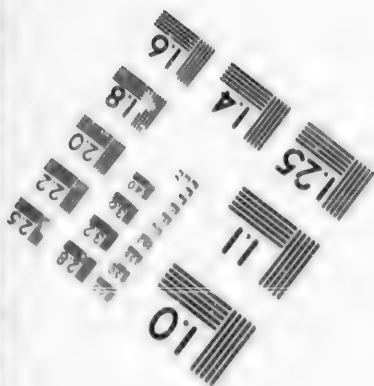




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The image of God defaced—the presence of God departed—a world of rational and immortal beings all lost, ‘all dead.’”† While the joyous Christian gazes upon this field of death, and beholds countless numbers of his fellow-men dead to God, dead to hope, dead to happiness, his heart heaves with painful emotions, tears bedim his eyes, and he mournfully exclaims, “‘All dead!’ not a single sign of spiritual life in any of them. ‘All dead!’” But see, he smiles through his tears; for he has caught a glimpse of the cross of Christ, which stands in the midst of the valley of death. He feels that if he can only bring the poor, dead souls to that cross, they will be made alive, and be brought to the image of God—to the favour of God—and to the heaven of God. Does he hesitate as to what he is to do? Ah, no! His resolution is taken. Nay, he is already carrying it into execution; for, behold! he has lifted up yon dead sinner; and in the arms of his faith and prayer, he is carrying him to Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life. Laying his burden at the foot of the cross, his heart is speedily filled with rapture, and his mouth with thanksgiving and the voice of praise; for he sees

Life, and health, and peace descending,  
From the sinner's dying friend,

upon that poor dead soul, and beholds him rise a new man in Christ Jesus. With unspeakable joy he extends to him the right hand of fellowship, and greets him as a brother in Christ. After a united song of praise to Jesus, who ever does all things well, together they start, to bring other dead souls to the Saviour, that they also may be restored to life. O! how happy they are, as they bring one after another to Jesus, the fountain of life and health, and the complete Saviour of all who come unto God by him. Every soul saved increases their joy, and strengthens their determinations to save souls from death and hell, by carrying them to the cross of their blessed Lord, where

“They may sit for ever viewing  
Mercy's streams, in streams of blood;  
Precious drops their souls bedewing,  
Plead and claim their peace with God.”

These are not exaggerated statements; for any man, and every man, that is filled with the joy of God's salvation will never stand among dead sinners, weeping over their sad state, without putting forth his energies to bring them to the enjoy-

† Ward, as quoted by Pike.

ment of that salvation which he himself has experienced. Knowing the joy of God's salvation, he will, with all the strength that joy imparts, labour to teach transgressors God's ways, that sinners may be converted to him. When a man has lost the joy of God's salvation, he may stand weeping over sinners, but he does nothing for their salvation, because he cannot; for with the loss of his joy, he has lost his strength. This is clearly seen in the history of David, king of Israel. When he sinned, he lost the joy of the Lord. He felt that he could no longer instruct and convert sinners. Humbling himself in the dust of self-abasement, he fervently cries to God, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."—Psalm li. 12, 13. When a man is happy in the enjoyment of God's salvation, he must desire that others shall be brought to share that salvation which makes him happy. He must feel an unconquerable determination to save souls; and that determination will be manifested in those prayers, in those acts of faith, in those entreaties, expostulations, reproofs, and exhortations, which must end in the conversion of souls. When the man in the parable found his lost sheep, he could not relish even his joy, until his neighbours shared in it. And when a man finds the joy of God's salvation, he cannot be satisfied without his miserable fellow-sinners around him share in his bliss. His joy is so strong, that it forces him to cry—

"O that the world might taste and see  
The riches of his grace!  
The arms of love that compass me,  
Would all mankind embrace.  
O that my Jesus' heavenly charms  
Might every bosom move!  
Fly, sinners, fly into those arms  
Of everlasting love.  
Happy, if with my latest breath,  
I may but gasp his name;  
Preach him to all, and cry in death,  
'Behold! behold the Lamb!'"

*The joy of the Lord is the strength of all our efforts with sinners; inasmuch as it lays hold of their affections with a giant's grasp. Their language constantly is, "Who will show us any good." They are constantly seeking happiness, but it as constantly eludes their pursuit. They are ever hewing them out cisterns, but they are all broken cisterns, which can hold no water. "The wicked are like the troubled*

sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."—Isa. lvii. 20, 21. This being the case, sinners will be both attracted and affected by the sight of that genuine happiness which those possess who are filled with the joy of the Lord. Our joy in God, if it is what it should be, will have more influence upon sinners, in leading them to salvation, than many imagine. When unconverted men and women, who are ever miserable, but who are ever intensely desiring happiness, see Christians always cheerful and happy; ever contented, however little they may possess; always rejoicing, however much they may have to suffer in body, mind, or estate; ever glad, and ever kind, however much they be tempted and persecuted; the lovely sight captivates their affections, and takes such a powerful hold of their hearts, that it forces them to acknowledge the superlative excellency of the religion of Jesus, which affords such happiness under all circumstances. Nor will the exhibition of pure, elevated, permanent joy end with exciting the admiration of the ungodly; but it will lead them seriously to think that religion is just what they want to make them happy,—lead them in the end to seek for it with all their hearts, that they may be as happy as those joyous Christians are whose blessedness they earnestly covet.

Until Christians are filled with the joy of the Lord, they will have but little power over sinners, and will bring very few of them from darkness to light, and from satan to God. Sinners have their minds pre-occupied with unfavourable thoughts of the religion of Jesus Christ. They regard religion as a melancholy thing, which makes people miserable; and until this impression is removed, it is not likely that you can induce them to become religious. The very reason why many sinners are not converted is, because they are acquainted with some professors of religion who are unhappy, morose beings—as far from happiness as the unconverted themselves. It is much to be lamented that some professors will meditate upon spiritual and eternal things in such a way as to cover their souls with gloom, fill their mouths with lamentations, and render their lives miserable. It is still more to be lamented that some who are called by the name of Christ are so worldly-minded, so negligent in the discharge of their religious duties, follow the Lord at such a distance, that it is impossible for men to be joyful in God. Both these classes of Christians hinder the conversion of souls, instead of promoting their salvation; for they both present religion to the world in a very

repulsive garb, and frighten away from Christ and the Church many who desire to be religious, but who can never think of living a life of moping melancholy and monastic austerity ; nor yet a life of fretfulness and constant uneasiness. Religion, fully possessed, is a most joyous thing. It embodies all the elements of rational and perennial joy. No truly religious man ought ever to indulge in thoughts that will make him wretched, or in practices that will make him miserable. Different constitutions may give a different aspect to religion ; but, still, unless joy is felt, we must be strangers to the salvation of God ; for joy is as inseparably connected with salvation, as light and heat are inseparably connected with fire. Joy in God may, and will manifest itself in different forms, in different individuals. In some it will be seen in raptures, resembling the blaze of a pine wood fire, that will almost instantly thaw the sinner into penitence and tears ; while in others, it will be seen in calmer mood, but greater intensity, resembling the steady blaze and the prolonged heat of the maple or the beech, that will warm the cold and lifeless sinner, and bring him to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. Some have said, "Be thankful for joy when you have it, but do not expect it. Peace is your birthright, but joy depends upon the sovereignty of God." Never was there uttered a more fallacious, dangerous sentiment than this. It is contrary to the declarations of the Bible, and it is calculated to hinder the salvation of souls. Joy is as much the Christian's birthright as peace ; and he must ever possess it, and ever manifest it, if he would seize sinners with strength divinely bold, and with strength sufficient to force them into the fold of Christ. Some professors of religion question the piety of a man, if his piety, arrayed in smiles, beams with pleasure, converses with cheerfulness, walks erect in dignity, and does every thing with Christian courtesy and honest boldness. They think that religion must wear a garb of sackcloth, look as solemn as the grave, converse in the tones of death, walk with downcast eyes and stooping gait, and do every thing with sullenness or timidity. While professors hold such mistaken views of the religion of Jesus, souls cannot be converted in any great numbers ; for these views will prevent Christians from presenting religion to the world in that joyous aspect which will explode all the objections of sinners against religion, on account of its tendency to make people miserable. That any Methodists should hold such sentiments is truly astonishing. Never was there a happier

man than the founder of Methodism—the Rev. John Wesley. Even in old age, his joy made him the delight of every social circle he entered. A contemporary says of him: "So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent;' and wherever he went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation, we might be at a loss whether to admire most, his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw, in his uninterrupted cheerfulness, the excellency of true religion."—A. Knox. If all his followers were like him in his "uninterrupted cheerfulness," the interests of religion would be greatly promoted. O! if you really wish sinners to be converted to God, you must put a cheerful courage on; you must "rejoice in the Lord alway,"—you must in Christ "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing," that sinners may, through the strength of your joy, be drawn from sin to holiness, and from satan to God.

*The joy of the Lord makes us strong to resist all the opposition we have to meet with in our endeavours to save souls.* That we shall meet with opposition there can be no doubt. If we resolutely attempt the salvation of souls, satan will not be idle; but he will hurl his fiery darts at us more vigorously than ever. An idle professor, who is at ease in Zion, he has no occasion to tempt; for he is going down to the chambers of death as rapidly and as surely as satan can desire. But with the active Christian it is otherwise. He must be looked after, or satan knows he will lose many of his subjects, by the exertions of such a saint. Satan, therefore, opposes, and will oppose, at every step the believer who is determined to save souls; and will by turns try deception, temptation, and accusation, to induce him to quit his work, yea, to give up religion. But the joy of the Lord is his strength, and makes him more than a conqueror through Christ. The enemies of a nation cannot produce insurrection when the monarch is really beloved by the people, and when, under his



sceptre, liberty, peace, and prosperity are enjoyed. Thousands would shed their heart's blood in defence of such a king, and in defence of their own best interests. And in what a surprising manner does the joy of the Lord strengthen a man's heart against all the attempts of satan to stop him in his work, or seduce him from his allegiance to the blessed and only Potentate. When a man's face is full of joy with the light of God's countenance, he would go to death sooner than grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by neglecting his duty to the souls of men. And as to seducing him from his allegiance, this will be no easy matter; for his hatred to sin is perfect, and his love and gratitude to God, for the joy he imparts to his soul, is such, that he resolutely resists every temptation, saying, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." Those who are happy in God have on them that armour which is proof against all the assaults of the devil. They are too happy in God to think of departing from him. Numbers before now have gone to the stake, or to the block, rather than commit sin. The very reason why numbers backslide is, because they neglect to secure, by the use of proper means, a continuance of the joy of the Lord. They must first lose their joy in God before they can hearken to any being who would tempt them to sin against God.

Besides, if we are determined to save souls, opposition we must expect from sinners, from their wicked relatives, and wicked companions. Satan will instigate them all to oppose us in our efforts to do them good. The sinner we specially seek to turn from the error of his ways will resist, as we have stated in a previous discourse. And his relatives and companions, who do not wish to see him pious, will stoutly oppose our efforts. They will sneer at our statements, insult us to our faces, and perhaps bid us be gone. Or they will strive to counteract our influence, by flattering the sinner that we are striving to convict and convert. We have met with instances where parents have striven to hinder the salvation of their own children's souls, when their children have been on the brink of eternity, just ready to take their flight into the presence of the judge of all, unforgiven and unsaved. But in such cases, the joy of the Lord will induce its possessor to persevere, and will give him a courage and a fortitude which will lead him even to brave the parent's ire, rather than see the object of his solicitude drop into hell, without a desperate effort to prevent so dreadful a catastrophe. Though the joyous Christian may feel to his heart's core the cruelty of such

conduct, both to himself and the object of his solicitude, yet he will return to the work with renewed diligence, faith, and prayer. He will not say, "I will give up the effort;" but having communed with God in prayer upon the matter, he will be heard to say, "I will try yet again." And not only so, but if we are resolutely bent upon saving souls, we shall be sure to alarm all the formalists in the church. The sinners in Zion will become afraid, and fearfulness will surprise the hypocrites. And we may expect to hear plenty about being righteous over-much—plenty of tales about fanatics, enthusiasts, madmen: for Christendom is more than half asleep on the subject of religion, and more than one half of her teeming millions are hurrying down to the pit with a lie in their right hand. But the joy of the Lord will give us strength sufficient to endure all the reproaches and revilings of men, and cause us to go forward in the discharge of our duty to the souls of men, utterly regardless of all that those may say who have a name to live, but yet are dead—"dead in trespasses and sins"—"having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

Here, then, is the great secret of success in saving souls. The joy of the Lord is your strength. While it gives strength to bear every trial, to sustain every affliction, to perform every duty, it especially gives us the strength required to save souls. To be useful to the souls of others, we must be fully happy in our own souls. Joy in God is a necessary grace; and unless we are full of all joy and peace in believing, we are not discharging, and we cannot discharge, our obligations to God and our duty to the souls of our fellow-men. We urge you, therefore, never to rest until God does fill you with all joy in believing. Wrestle with him in prayer and faith till you can rejoice in Christ with joy unspeakable. Do this every day. Never cease your private devotions, morning, noon, or night, any day throughout your future lives, until you are full of joy with the light of God's countenance. In order daily to rejoice in the Lord your God, meditate frequently upon his great goodness to you. Meditations upon his love, are like bellows to the fire: they make us burn with love, and gratitude, and joy; and then, depend upon it, our zeal for the salvation of souls will ever burn with a brilliant, steady, constant flame. To rejoice in God daily, study the exceeding great and precious promises which are given unto you; become familiar with them; dare to

believe them ; realize them as your own ; live upon them ; and they will be your exceeding joy. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them : and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."—Jer. xv. 16. Let the promises of God be your daily food, and you will, you must, be constantly happy. We urge you to be happy Christians, not merely for your own sakes, but in order that you may win souls to Christ, save them from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

Some of you now present have lost the joy of God's salvation. You did run well, but something has hindered. You were once useful in saving souls, but now you are doing more mischief than you ever did good. Your grievous backslidings sinners are stumbling at ; and if you lie wallowing in the mire of sin, numbers will tumble over you into the bottomless pit. There is mercy for you, if you will repent and do your first works. O for the sake of the immortal souls of your fellow-men, return to the shepherd and bishop of your souls ! To night, in sincerity, with earnestness, and faith, cry, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

We have now finished the series of discourses we proposed to deliver, on the obligations of Christians to seek the salvation of the souls of their fellow-men. But though they are finished, they are not done with. There is a day of judgment rapidly approaching, when we must every one of us give an account to God. For these discourses we must answer. Your minister must answer for their preparation and delivery. You must answer for their result upon your hearts and lives. Remember an inspired apostle says to you, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."—Heb. xii. 17.

Now, my dear hearers, will you obey your pastor, and fill his heart now with joy, and enable him to render his account of you to the judge of all with joy, and not with grief, by praying, believing, labouring, and living for the salvation of the precious and immortal souls of your fellow-creatures ? This is all we ask. This you all can do. This you all are

bound to do. This you all must do if, you are to be saved. May the eternal God, for Christ's sake, grant that your minister may not have to render an account of you at the last day with grief. Amen.

THE END.

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## ERRATA.

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| <i>Page.</i>  | <i>Line.</i> | <i>Error.</i> | <i>Correction.</i> |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 22 . . . . .  | 21 . . . . . | sinulous      | simulous.          |
| 33 . . . . .  | 27 . . . . . | fellows       | follows.           |
| 39 . . . . .  | 32 . . . . . | lowliness     | lowness.           |
| 145 . . . . . | 32 . . . . . | living        | green.             |
| 147 . . . . . | 9 . . . . .  | beauty        | beauty.            |
| 203 . . . . . | 24 . . . . . | will          | rule.              |
| 205 . . . . . | 3 . . . . .  | study         | duty.              |
| 228 . . . . . | 29 . . . . . | heart         | breast.            |
| 274 . . . . . | 9 . . . . .  | your          | you.               |
| 333 . . . . . | 31 . . . . . | cenquer       | conquer.           |
| 351 . . . . . | 36 . . . . . | subject       | object.            |

212 The sentence commencing in the middle of the 17th line should read thus :—There are no more bounds to confine the affections than there are to confine the intellect ; and, therefore, if the intellectual powers of a man are capable of constant progression, the feelings of a man may increase in sensibility, tenderness, and ardour. Let, then, your hearts, &c.

There are a few other typographical errors in this work, but as they do not affect the sense, and will be at once discerned by the reader, they need not be particularly noted. The author is extremely sorry that these errors have crept in ; but distance from the press prevented him from detecting them ere the sheets were struck off.

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